Edition De Luxe

THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

(Self Interpreting)

Volume IV

ILLUSTRATED WITH SIXTY ETCHINGS
AND WOOD CUTS, MAPS
AND FACSIMILES

Edinburgh Fraternity
New York

Edition De Luxe

Limited to One Thousand Sets

COPYRIGHT 1886
BY
GEBBIE & COMPANY
COPYRIGHT 1908
BY
KARL A. ARVIDSON
COPYRIGHT 1909
BY
JAMES L. PERKINS & COMPANY

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME IV.

BURNS, in 1791, had reached the zenith of his powers. The date of Tam O'Shanter marks it. Dr. Waddell, of this period, most eloquently says: "His climax of ascension was over the Nith at Ellisland, with his countenance westward.* Such unprecedented elevation might no doubt have been prolonged, but his approaching removal to Dumfries as an officer of excise determined it. . . . That he still struggled with uncertain balance to retain it, is true; but adverse influences, both natural and social, were already beginning to drag him down; and occasional dallyings with the foreign English Muse, with exaggerated compliments to inferior rivals on the Mount of Song, whose topmost level never reached his feet, seem to indicate the approaching danger. To Dumfries, however, with darkening or illusive prospects, and dubious patronage; with multitudinous temptations and uncertain foot; with sycophants, and spies, and tale-bearers to government and to posterity, before him, he must go. The establishment at Ellisland is dissolved; the disposal of stock and of all superfluous gear follows; the removal is accomplished. Farewell, Ellisland—romantic, ill-cultivated, abortive farm!"

It was at Martinmas (November) 1791 that he removed from Ellisland to Dumfries, and, in September the following year, began his correspondence with George Thomson, from which sprang the finest collection of Songs ever penned by a single mortal.

The period covered in this volume is from October 1790 till April 1794; age 32 to 36. G. G.

* Meaning his mind's eye fixed on Alloway Kirk.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME IV.

POETRY.

	PAGE
Tam o' Shanter—A Tale	1
On the Birth of a Posthumous Child	17
Elegy on the late Miss Burnet of Monboddo	18
Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots	20
Song—There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame	22
Song—Out over the Forth	23
Song—The Banks o' Doon (first version)	24
Song—The Banks o' Doon (second version)	25
Song—The Banks o' Doon (third version)	27
Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn	28
Lines to Sir John Whitefoord, Bart.	32
Song—Craigieburn Wood	33
Song—The Bonie Wee Thing	36
Epigram on Miss Davies	37
Song—The Charms of Lovely Davies	38
Song—What can a Young Lassie do wi' an Auld Man?	40
Song—The Posie	42
On Glenriddell's Fox breaking his chain: A Fragment	44
Poem on Pastoral Poetry	47
Verses on the destruction of the Woods near Drumlanrig.	50
Song—The Gallant Weaver	52
Epigram at Brownhill Inn	53
Song—You're Welcome, Willie Stewart	54
Song—Lovely Polly Stewart	55
Song—Fragment—Damon and Sylvia	56
Song—Fragment—Johnie, Lad, Cock up your Beaver	58
Song—My Eppie Macnab	58
Song—Fragment—Altho' he has left me	59
Song—My Tocher's the Jewel	60
Song—O for ane an' twenty, Tam	61
Song—Thou Fair Eliza	62
Song—My Bonie Bell	63
Song—Sweet Afton	64

PAGE
Address to the shade of Thomson 68
Song—Nithsdale's Welcome Hame 70
Song—Frae the friends and land I love 72
Song—Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation 73
Song—Ye Jacobites by Name 74
Song—I hae been at Crookieden 75
Song—O Kenmure's on and awa', Willie 76
Epistle to John Maxwell, Esq., of Terraughty 78
Second Epistle to Robert Graham, Esq., of Fintry 79
The Song of Death 82
Poem on Sensibility 84
Epigram—The Toadeater 86
Epigram—Divine Service at Lamington 86
Epigram—The Keekin Glass 87
A Grace before Dinner 88
A Grace after Dinner 88

THE DUMFRIES PERIOD, NOVEMBER, 1791 TO JULY, 1796.

Song—The Dearest o' the Quorum 90
Parting Song to Clarinda 92
Song—Behold the Hour, the Boat, arrive 93
Song—Thou Gloomy December 95
Song—My Native Land sae far awa' 96

1792.

Lines on Fergusson, the Poet 97
Song—I do confess Thou art sae fair 97
Song—The Weary Pund o' Tow 98
Song—When she cam' ben she bobbet 100
Song—Scroggam, my dearie 101
Song—My Collier Laddie 102
Song—Sic a wife as Willie had 103
Song—Lady Mary Ann 105
Song—Kelly Burn Braes 106
Song—The Slave's Lament 109
Song—O can ye labor lea? 111
Song—The Deuk's dang o'er my daddie 112
Song—The Deil's awa' wi' th' Exciseman 113
Song—The Country Lass 115
Song—Bessy and her Spinnin' Wheel 117
Song—Fragment—No cold approach 118
Song—Fragment—Love for Love 118
Fragment on Maria 119

PAGE
Song—Saw ye Bonie Leslie 120
Song—I'll meet Thee on the Lea-Rig 122
Song—My Wife's a winsome wee Thing 123
Song—Highland Mary 125
The Rights of Woman—Spoken by Miss Fontenelle . . . 127
Epigram on Miss Fontenelle 129
Extempore on some commemorations of Thomson 129
Song—Auld Rob Morris 130
Song—Duncan Gray 132
Song—Here's a Health to them that's awa' 134
A Tippling Ballad—"When Princes and Prelates," etc . . 136

1793.
Epigram on Politics 137
Song—Poortith cauld and restless love 138
Song—Braw Lads o' Gala Water 140
Sonnet on the Author's Birthday 142
Lord Gregory: a Ballad 143
Song—Wandering Willie 145
Song—Wandering Willie (revised version) 146
Song—Open the door to me, oh 147
Song—Lovely young Jessie 148
Song—Meg o' the Mill 149
Song—Meg o' the Mill (another version) 150
The Soldier's Return: a Ballad 151
Epigram—The True Loyal Natives 155
Epigram—On Commissary Goldie's Brains 156
Lines inscribed in a Lady's Pocket Almanac 157
Epigram—Thanksgiving for a National Victory 157
Lines on the Commemoration of Rodney's Victory 157
Epigram—Kirk and State Excisemen 159
Epigram—The Raptures of Folly 159
A Grace after Meat 159
Grace before and after Meat 160
Impromptu on Dumouriez's desertion from the French Republican Army 160
Song—The last time I came o'er the Moor 162
Song—Blythe hae I been on yon hill 163
Song—Logan Braes 164
Song—O were my love yon lilac fair 166
Bonie Jean: a Ballad 167
Lines on John M'Murdo, Esq. 170
Epitaph on a Lap-dog 170
Epigrams against the Earl of Galloway 171

PAGE
Epigram on the Laird of Laggan 172
Song—Phillis the Fair 173
Song—Had I a cave 174
Song—By Allan Stream 175
Song—Whistle and I'll come to you 177
Song—Phillis the Queen o' the Fair 178
Song—Come, let me take Thee to my breast 180
Song—Dainty Davie 181
Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn 182
Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn (another version) . 184
Song—Behold the hour, etc. (second version) 185
Song—Down the Burn, Davie 186
Song—Thou hast left me ever, Jamie 187
Song—Where are the joys I hae met? 189
Song—Deluded swain, the pleasure 190
Song—Thine am I, my faithful Fair 191
Impromptu on Mrs. Riddell's Birthday 192
Song—My Spouse Nancy 193
Address spoken by Miss Fontenelle 194
Complimentary Epigram on Mrs. Riddell 196

1794.

Remorseful Apology 197
Song—Wilt thou be my Dearie? 198
Song—A fiddler in the North 199
Song—A red, red Rose 200
Song—Resistless King of Love 201
Song—The Flowery banks of Cree 202
Monody on a lady famed for her Caprice 203
Epitaph on the same 204
Epigram pinned to Mrs. Riddell's carriage 204
Epitaph for Mr. Walter Riddell 204
Epistle from Esopus to Maria 205
Epitaph on a noted Coxcomb 208
Epitaph on Captain Lascelles 209
Epitaph on Wm. Graham, Esq., of Mossknowe 209
Epitaph on John Bushby, Esq., Tinwald Downs 209
Sonnet on the death of Robt. Riddell 210
Song—The Lovely Lass o' Inverness 211
Song—Charlie, he's my Darling 212
Song—Bannocks o' Bear Meal 214
Song—The Highland Balow 215
The Highland Widow's Lament 216
Song—It was a' for our rightfu' King 218

PROSE.

PAGE
Letter (2) to Captain Grose, F.S.A.—October 220
Letter (29) to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop—November 224

1791.

Letter (4) to William Dunbar, Esq., W.S.—January 17 . . 225
Letter (8) to Peter Hill, Bookseller, Edinburgh—January 17. 226
Letter (6) to Alexander Cunningham, Writer, Edinburgh, January 23 228
Letter (30) to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop—February 7 229
Letter (1) to the Rev. Archibald Alison—February 14 . . . 230
New Edition of Poems by Michael Bruce—February, 1791. 232
Letter (1) to the Rev. George H. Baird—February 233
Michael Bruce's Poems, and Tam o' Shanter 234
Letter (1) to Mrs. Graham of Fintry—February 234
Letter (8) to Dr. John Moore, London—February 27 . . . 235
Letter (9) to Peter Hill, Bookseller—March 239
*Letter (7) to Alexander Cunningham—March 11 242
Letter (7) to John Ballantine, Esq.—March 245
Letter (1) to Alex. Dalziel, Findlayston House—March 19. 246
Letter (1) to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham—March 247
Birth of William Nicol Burns—April 9 248
Letter (31) to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop—April 11 248
Letter (1) to Alexander Fraser Tytler, Esq.—April . . . 250
Letter (1) to Charles Sharpe, Esq., of Hoddam—April 22 252
Letter (2) to Lady W. Maxwell Constable—April 254
The two Glenriddell volumes of Burns' MSS. in the Library of the Athenæum at Liverpool—April 27 . . . 255
Letter (1) to Sir John Sinclair, Bart.—May 257
Letter (1) Unaddressed—"*Deil tak the foremost.*"—May . 259
Letter (2) Unaddressed—"*Thou Eunuch, &c.*"—May . . 259
*Letter (1) to John Somerville, Writer, Edinburgh—May 11. 260
The poet's daughter Elizabeth, by Anne Park, (born 31 March) 262
Letter (2) to Alex. Findlater, Supervisor—June 263
The Lorimers of Kemmis Ha' 264
Letter (8) to Alex. Cunningham, Esq., Writer—June 11 . 264
James Clarke, Schoolmaster, Moffat 266
*Letter (1) to the Rev. Mr. Moodie, Edinburgh—June . . 267
*Letter dictated for Clarke to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh 286
*Letter (2) to Collector Mitchell, Dumfries—June 16 . . . 270
Marriage of Gilbert Burns, the poet's Brother 270
Letter (10) to Peter Hill, Bookseller—June 270

PAGE

Letter (1) to Miss Davies, with a Ballad—August 271
Letter (2) to Miss Davies, with a song—August 273
Letter (1) to Mr. Thomas Sloan—September 1 275
Letter (2) to the Earl of Buchan—September 277
Letter (1) to James Gracie, Esq., Banker—September . . 278
*Letter dictated for Clarke the Schoolmaster—September . 278
The Afton Manuscripts, some account of them 279
*Letter (1) to Mr. Corbet, Supervisor-General of Excise . . 280
Letter (1) to Col. Fullarton, of Fullarton—October 3 . . . 281
Letter (8) to Robt. Graham, Esq., of Fintry—October 5 . 282
Letter (11) to Peter Hill, Bookseller—October 283
Preparation to leave Ellisland at Martinmas 285
Close of the Ellisland period 285
Letter (14) to Robert Ainslie, W.S.—November, 1791 . . . 285
Letter (32) to Mrs. Dunlop—December 17 287

1792.

Letter (1) to James Clarke, Schoolmaster—January 10 . . 288
Mrs. Maria Riddell, Woodley Park, Dumfries 289
Letter (1) to William Smellie, Printer, Edinburgh, January 22 289
Letter (12) to Peter Hill, Bookseller, Edinburgh—February 5 291
Letter (9) to Alex. Cunningham, Edinburgh—February 5. 292
Letter (2) to James Clarke, Schoolmaster—February 17 . 293
French Revolution, its progress from 1789 294
*Letter to J. Leven, Gen. Superviser of Excise—March . . 295
*Letter (2) to William Creech, Bookseller—April 16 . . . 296
*Letter (6) to James Johnson, Music Engraver—May . . . 298
Letter (1) to Stephen Clarke, Organist, Edinburgh—July 16 298
Johnson's Museum, Preface to Vol. IV.—August 12 . . . 299
Letter (3) to Robert Riddell of Glenriddell—August . . . 300
*Letter (1) to the Duke of Queensberry 301
Letter (33) to Mrs. Dunlop—August 22 303
Letter (10) to Alex. Cunningham, Writer, Edinburgh—September 10 306
*Letter (2) to Mr. Corbet, Gen. Superviser of Excise—September 310
Commencement of the Correspondence betwixt Burns and George Thomson—September 312
Letter (34) to Mrs. Dunlop—September 24 312
Birth of the poet's daughter, "Elizabeth Riddell"—November 21 314
Letter (35) to Mrs. Dunlop—October 314

PAGE
French Revolution—its further progress 315
Letter (1) to Captain Johnstone, Edinburgh Gazetteer Office —November 13 316
Letter (1) to Mrs. Walter Riddell, Woodley Park—November 316
Letter (2) to Mrs. Walter Riddell, Woodley Park—November 317
Letter (1) to Miss Fontenelle, Actress, Dumfries—November 318
Letter (36) to Mrs. Dunlop—December 6 318
Letter (1) to Miss Mary Peacock, Edinburgh—December 6. 321
Letter (5) to Robert Cleghorn, Saughton Mills—December 12 322
Letter (9) to Robert Graham of Fintry—December 322
Letter (37) to Mrs. Dunlop—December 31. *Excise Admonition* 324

1793.

Letter (37) continued, to Mrs. Dunlop—January 2 and 5 . 324
The Whigmeleerie Cup and the Baptism 327
Letter (10) to Robert Graham of Fintry—January 5 . . . 327
Letter (2) to Mrs. Graham of Fintry—January 5 331
Mary Wollstonecraft and the Rights of Woman 331
*William Nicol, Teacher, Edinburgh, to Robert Burns—February 10 333
*Letter (6) to William Nicol—February 20 334
Letter (11) to Alexander Cunningham, Writer, Edinburgh —February 20 336
Letter (3) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—February . . . 337
New Edition of the Author's Poems, in 2 vols.—February 338
*Letter (3) to William Creech, Bookseller—February 28 . 338
Letter (4) to John M'Murdo, Esq., Drumlanrig—March . 338
Letter (1) to John, fifteenth Earl of Glencairn—March . . 339
Letter (3) to Mrs. Graham of Fintry—March 340
*Letter (4) to Robert Riddell of Glenriddell—March . . . 341
*Miss Davies, ("Bonie Wee Thing,") to Robert Burns—March 14 342
Letter (1) to Miss Benson, York—March 21 342
Letter (1) to the Provost, Bailies, and Town Council of Dumfries—March 344
*Letter to Mr. White, Teacher, Dumfries Academy—April. 345
Letter (3) to Patrick Miller, Esq., Dalswinton—April . . 345
*Letter (1) to John F. Erskine, Esq., of Mar—April 13 . . 347
*Letter (13) to Peter Hill, Bookseller—April 351
Letter (4) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—April 352
Letter (5) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—April 353

PAGE

Letter (6) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—April 353
Letter (15) to Robert Ainslie, W.S.—April 26 353
Removal to another house—the poet's final residence . . 355
Letter (1) to Miss Leslie Baillie—May 356
*Letter (1) to Miss M'Murdo, Drumlanrig—July 357
*Letter (5) to John M'Murdo, Esq., Drumlanrig—July . . 359
Letter (8) to Gavin Hamilton, Mauchline—July 16 360
Publication of George Thomson's first half-volume—July. 361
Letter (6) to John M'Murdo, Esq., Drumlanrig—July . . 362
Excursion into Galloway with John Syme—July 27 . . . 362
Letter (1) to Captain Miller, Dalswinton—September . . 366
*Letter (7) to James Johnson, Music Engraver—October . 367
*Letter (8) to James Johnson, Music Engraver—October . 368
Letter (7) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—November . . 369
Letter (8) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—November . . 370
*Letter (2) to Miss Fontenelle, Actress, Dumfries—December 2 371
Letter (1) to Captain ———, Dumfries—December 5 . . . 371
Letter (2) to Alex. Fraser Tytler, Esq.—December 6 . . . 373
Letter (7) to John M'Murdo, Esq.—December 374
The Merry Muses of Caledonia 375
*Letter (6) to Robert Cleghorn, Saughton Mills—October 25 376
The Patriarch, Address to the Reader 377
*Letter (7) to Robert Cleghorn, Saughton Mills 378
Letter (38) to Mrs. Dunlop—December 15 379
The Glenriddell MSS. of Burns's Letters 381

1794.

Letter (11) to Robert Graham, of Fintry—January 382
Letter (3) to the Earl of Buchan—January 12 384
*The Earl of Buchan to R. H. Cromek—23d February, 1809 385
Letter (1) to Samuel Clark, junr., Dumfries—January . . 386
Letter (2) to Samuel Clark, junr., Dumfries—January . 387
Letter (9) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—January . . . 388
Letter (10) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—January . . . 390
Letter (11) to Mrs. Riddell, Woodley Park—January . . . 391
Letter (12) to Alex. Cunningham, Edinburgh—25th February 392
*Letter (14) to Peter Hill, Bookseller, Edinburgh—February 394
*Letter (9) to James Johnson, Edinburgh—February . . . 395
Letter (3) to Alex. Findlater, Supervisor—February . . . 396
*Letter (13) to Alex. Cunningham, Edinburgh—3rd March 397

END OF VOLUME IV.

"Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle."

POEMS AND SONGS.

TAM O' SHANTER:

A TALE.

"Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this Buke."
GAWIN DOUGLAS.
(EDINBURGH ED., 1793.)

WHEN *chapman billies* leave the street, merchant / comrades
And *drouthy* neibors, neibors meet; thirsty
As market days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to *tak the gate;* set out homeward
While we sit bowsing at the *nappy*, ale
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, *slaps*, and styles, gaps
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest TAM O' SHANTER,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, whom ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a *skellum*, worthless fellow
A bletherin, blusterin, drunken *blellum;* windbag
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka *melder* wi' the Miller, grist
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on
The Smith and thee gat roarin fou on;
That at the L—d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton* Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that, late or soon,
Thou wad be found, deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the *mirk*, dark
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it *gars* me *greet*, makes weep
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an *ingle*, bleezing finely, fire-side
Wi' *reaming swats*, that drank divinely; frothing ale
And at his elbow, *Souter* Johnie, shoemaker
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter:
And ay the ale was growing better:
The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favors secret, sweet and precious:

* Any little village where a parish church is erected is called "the Kirkton."

TAM O' SHANTER—"The Souter tauld his queerest stories."

The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might *rair* and rustle, roar
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the *nappy*. ale
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the Borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the Rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether Time nor Tide,
The hour approaches Tam *maun* ride— must
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he took the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray meare Meg,
A better never lifted leg,

Tam *skelpit* on thro' *dub* and mire, hurried pools
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet, sometimes
Whiles *crooning* o'er an auld Scots sonnet, humming
Whiles *glow'ring* round wi' prudent cares, gazing
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and *houlets* nightly cry. owls

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the *birks* and *meikle* stane, birches big
Where drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane;
And thro' the *whins*, and by the cairn, furze
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, *aboon* the well, above
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods,
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,
The lightnings flash frae pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll,
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a breeze,
Thro' *ilka* bore the beams were glancing, every
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' *tippenny*, we fear nae evil; twopenny ale
Wi' *usquabae*, we'll face the devil! whisky
The *swats* sae ream'd in Tammie's *noddle*, ale / head
Fair play, he car'd na deils a *boddle*, cent
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an *unco* sight! strange

TAM'S DEPARTURE—

"That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in."

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
Nae cotillon, *brent* new frae France, brand
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A *winnock-bunker* in the east, window-recess
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A *towzie* tyke, black, grim, and large, shaggy
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and *gart* them skirl, made
Till roof and rafters a' did *dirl.*— vibrate
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the Dead in their last dresses;[1]
And (by some devilish *cantraip* sleight) magic
Each in its cauld hand held a light,[2]
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes, in gibbet-*airns;* irons
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd *bairns;* babes
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his *gab* did gape; mouth
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted:
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;[3]
A garter, which a babe had strangled:
A knife a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son of life bereft,
The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awefu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The Piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they
cleekit, linked
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,*

* Till each old woman perspired and smoked.—J. H.

And *coost* her *duddies* on the wark, cast clothing
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' *creeshie* flannen, greasy
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!—*
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair, These
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae *blink* o' the bonie burdies! glimpse
But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie† hags wad *spean* a foal, wean
Louping an' flinging on a *crummock*, leaping staff
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam kent what was what *fu brawlie*: full well
There was ae winsome wench and *waulie*, loveable
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore;
(For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and *bear*, barley
And held the country-side in fear);
Her *cutty* sark, o' Paisley *harn*, short flax
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was *vauntie*. proud
Ah! little kent thy reverend grannie,
That sark she *coft* for her wee Nannie, bought
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

---

* The manufacturer's term for very fine linen, woven in a reed of 1700 divisions.

† The rigwoodie was the band (originally of plaited withes) that passed over a horse's back, yoking it to a cart. The witches were as dry and tough as this.—J. H.

THE WITCHES' DANCE IN ALOWAY KIRK—

"The Piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew."

But here my Muse her wing maun cow'r,
Sic flights are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And *hotch'd* and blew wi' might and main: hitched
Till first *ae* caper, *syne* anither, one then
Tam *tint* his reason a' thegither, lost
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry *fyke*, fuss
When plundering herds assail their *byke;* nest
As open *pussie's* mortal foes, hares
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an *eldritch* skriech and hollow. unearthly

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy coming!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane o' the brig;*
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.

* It is a well-known fact that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveler, that when he falls in with *bogles*, whatever danger may be in going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.—*R. B.*

But ere the key-stane she could make,
The *fient* a tail she had to shake! deuce
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious *ettle;* attempt
But little *wist* she Maggie's mettle! guessed
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The *carlin* claught her by the rump, huzzy
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Each man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to Drink you are inclin'd,
Or Cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's meare.

[The first reference to this poem in the author's printed correspondence, is found in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated November 1790. . . . . "I was much flattered by your approbation of my *Tam O' Shanter.*"]

TAM O' SHANTER—

"Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail."

On collating the author's text with a very fine photo-lithographic *fac-simile* of one of the manuscripts of this poem published by Adams & Francis, 59 Fleet Street, London, the following variations appear:—

[1] The four grand lines commencing "Coffins stood round" appear in the MS. as a marginal substitute for this Common-place couplet deleted:—

"The torches climb around the wa',
Infernal fires, blue-bleezing a'."

[2] Here is introduced the following couplet, also deleted:—

"Seven gallows pins, three hangman's whittles,
A raw o' weel-seal'd doctor's bottles."

[3] Here are introduced the four lines contained in Grose's printed copy, and omitted by the poet, at the request of Mr. Fraser Tytler, afterwards Lord Woodhouselee.

"Three Lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
Wi' lies seam'd like a beggar's clout,
Three Priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck,
Lay, stinking, vile, in every neuk."

Allan Cunningham says: "This is a West-country legend, embellished by genius. No other Poem in our language displays such variety of power, in the same number of lines. It was written as an inducement to Grose to admit Alloway-Kirk into his work on the Antiquities of Scotland; and written with such ecstacy, that the poet shed tears in the moments of composition. The walk in which it was conceived, on the braes of Ellisland, is held in remembrance in the vale, and pointed out to poetic inquirers; while the scene where the Poem is laid—the crumbling ruins—the place where the chapman perished in the snow—the tree on which the poor mother of Mungo ended her sorrows—the cairn where the murdered child was found by the hunters—and the old bridge over which Maggie bore her astonished master when all hell was in pursuit, are first-rate objects of inspection and enquiry in the 'Land of Burns.'"

Rev. Mr. Waddell, in an interesting note on this marvelous production of genius—by many esteemed the finest of all Burns's productions—tells us that "it was written, or at least composed, at Ellisland, on a broomy ridge by the river-side, a much-frequented haunt of the Author's, in one continuous fit of inspiration, during an autumnal day, in 1790. It is affirmed by Mr. McDiarmid (editor of *The Dumfries Courier*) to have been actually committed to writing on the spot—'on the top of a sod-dyke over the water'—and read by the Poet immediately afterwards to his wife 'in great triumph at the fireside.' It is at least an ascertained fact (on Lockhart's

authority) that he was discovered by his wife in an agony of laughter, reciting aloud certain lines of the poem which he had just conceived, the tears in the meantime rolling down his cheeks; and that she withdrew from the neighborhood for a moment, along with her children, that they might not interrupt his ecstacy. The lines referred to were those beginning

'Now Tam, O Tam! had they been queans.'

The poem itself, according to his brother Gilbert, was written in consequence of a friendly agreement with Captain Grose, who was then on a visit at Carse House (Friar's Carse) in the neighborhood. The Captain, as the world knows, was a devout antiquary in difficulties, and at that time engaged in collecting materials for a work on Scottish Antiquities. He promised at the Carse, on Burns's request to delineate Kirk-Alloway in his collection, if Burns himself would supply a witch or ghost-story in connection with the subject. 'Tam O' Shanter' was conceived in consequence, at first in prose, but afterwards in verse, and appeared for the first time in Grose's Work, April, 1791. Grose, we learn on the authority of Mr. Douglas, supplied Burns with a dozen proof-sheets of the printed poems, and thereby saved him the labor of making manuscript copies for his friends.

The character who figured as the prototype of Tam is thus sketched by Robert Chambers: "The original of Tam O' Shanter was an individual named Douglas Graham, a Carrick farmer. Shanter is a farm on the Carrick shore which Graham long possessed. The man was in sober, or rather drunken truth, the 'bletherin', blusterin' blellum' that the poet has described; and his wife was as veritably a lady who discouraged drinking in her husband. Burns, when a boy, spent some time at Kirkoswald, in the house of a maternal uncle, who at once practiced the craft of a miller and sold home-brewed ale. To this house Graham and his brother-in-law, the farmer of Duquhat (which lies between Kirkoswald and Shanter) used to resort; and finding in Burns some qualities, which, boy as he was, recommended him to their attention, they made him everything but their drinking companion. Sometimes the two topers, tired of ale, which they said was rather cold for the stomach, would adjourn to Duquhat, and correct their native liquor with good brandy, which at that time was supplied by smugglers to every house in Carrick at a price merely nominal. . . . After perhaps spending half a night at Duquhat, the farmer of that place, with Burns, would accompany Graham to Shanter; but as the idea of the 'sulky, sullen dame' rose in their minds, a debate would arise as to the propriety of venturing . . into the house. . . . Such were the opportunities afforded to the poet of observing the life of the Carrick farmers of those days.

It is not easy for the actual writer of a fiction to point out the skeleton ideas and incidents, the shadowy fragments of original and real life, which he has used in composing his work, and any task of this kind must, of course, be still more difficult to another party, writing at the distance of a generation. Among the facts, however, which must have gone to the composition of 'Tam O' Shanter,' there is one, never yet noticed, which probably suggested the tail-piece with which the diabolic panorama is concluded. Douglas Graham had, it seems, a good gray mare, which was very much identified with his own appearance. One day, being in Ayr, he tied the animal to a ring at the door of a public-house, where he tarried so long that the boys, in the meantime, plucked away the whole of his mare's tail for the purpose of making fishing-lines. It was not till next morning, when he awoke from a protracted bouse, that the circumstance was discovered by his son, who came in, crying that the mare had lost her tail. Graham, when he comprehended the amount of the disaster, was, it seems, so much bewildered as to its cause, that he could only attribute it to the agency of witches. There can be no doubt, we think, that this affair working in Burns's recollection, was seized upon as the catastrophe to the story, of which the main part, it is well-known, was a fire-side legend, respecting a person of unknown name and character."

"Kirkoswald people insist," says Douglas, "that not only 'Tam' and his wife 'Kate' and 'Cutty-sark' had their prototypes in persons who lived and died in the neighborhood, but that Souter Johnnie also belonged to their country-side." The following inscription on a tablet in Kirkoswald churchyard marks the last resting-place of "the veritable Tam." "D. G.—H. M.—Erected by Douglas Graham and Helen, his wife, in memory of their son, John Graham, who died December 10th, 1785, aged 18 years. Also Helen McTaggart his spouse, who died 2nd December, 1798, aged 56 years. Also Douglas Graham, who died February 14th, 1811, aged 72 years." The grave of a John Davidson is also pointed out in Kirkoswald churchyard as that of "Souter Johnnie;" but the tale leads rather to the conclusion that the "Souter" was a resident of Ayr. Waddell tells us, on the authority of Rev. Mr. Hogg, Kirkmahoe, that Kate Steen (the assumed prototype of "Cutty-sark") was "an inoffensive but peculiar woman; of diminutive stature and strange attire, of vagrant but industrious habits, who carried her 'rock and spindle' with her from house to house to spin, and was kindly, or at least civilly, received everywhere, from fear, perhaps, of her reputed supernatural gifts." "Kirkton Jean" was a Jean Kennedy, who, in conjunction with her sister, kept a reputable public-house in Kirkoswald, which, on account of the sisters having some pretensions to birth, was known as "The Ladies' House."

Having thus made the reader in some degree acquainted with the originals, or supposed originals, of the principal actors in this wonderful drama (no one, so far as we are aware, has ventured to identify the landlord and landlady) we proceed next to give him some idea of the localities associated with it. The inn which was the supposed scene of the carousal, is, says Waddell, still pointed out in the High Street of Ayr. Robert Chambers's description of Kirk-Alloway and its surroundings, written so long ago as 1833, being still the clearest and most felicitous we have seen, we again lay him under contribution. "Kirk Alloway, with its little enclosed burial-ground, stands beside the road from Ayr to Maybole, about two miles from the former town. The church has long been roofless, but the walls are pretty well preserved, and it still retains its bell at the east end. Upon the whole the spectator is struck with the idea that the witches must have had a rather narrow stage for the performance of their revels. The winnock-bunker in the east, where sat the awful musician of the party, is a conspicuous feature, being a small window divided by a thick mullion. Around the building are the vestiges of other openings, at any of which the hero of the tale may be supposed to have looked in on the awful scene. Within the last few years, the old oaken rafters of the kirk were mostly entire, but they have been entirely taken away to form, in various shapes, memorials of a place so remarkably signalized by genius. . . The old road from Ayr to this spot, by which Burns supposed his hero to have approached Alloway Kirk, was considerably to the west of the present one. Upon a field about a quarter of a mile to the northwest of the kirk, is a single tree, the last remnant of a group which covered

'the cairn
whare hunters found the murdered bairn;'

and immediately beyond that object is

'the ford
whare in the snaw the chapman smoored.'

(namely a ford over a small burn which soon after joins the Doon) being two places which Tam O'Shanter is described as having passed on his solitary way. The road then made a sweep towards the river, and passing a well which trickles down into the Doon, where formerly stood a thorn on which an individual, called in the poem 'Mungo's mither,' committed suicide, approached Alloway-Kirk upon the west. The churchyard contains several old monuments of a very humble description, marking the resting-places of undistinguished persons who formerly lived in the neighborhood. Among those persons rests William Burness, father of the poet, over whose grave the son had piously raised a

small stone, recording his name and the date of his death, together with the short poetical tribute to his memory which is copied in the works of the bard. But for this monument, long ago destroyed and carried away piecemeal, there is now substituted one of somewhat finer proportions. But the church-yard of Alloway has now become fashionable with the dead as well as the living. Its little area is absolutely crowded with modern monuments, referring to persons many of whom have been brought from considerable distances to take their rest in this doubly consecrated ground."

The following tributes from men themselves illustrious in literature find their appropriate place here.

"In the inimitable tale of 'Tam O'Shanter,'" says Sir Walter Scott, "Burns has left us sufficient evidence of his ability to combine the ludicrous with the awful and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakespeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions. His humorous description of Death (in the poem of Dr. Hornbook) borders on the terrific, and the witches' dance in the Kirk of Alloway is at once ludicrous and horrible." Lockhart tells us that "to the last Burns was of opinion that 'Tam O'Shanter' was the best of all of his productions; and although it does not always happen that the poet and the public come to the same conclusion on such points, I believe the decision in question has been all but unanimously approved of."—Wordsworth's eloquent analysis of this piece is worthy of that poet's fame. "Who but some impenetrable dunce, or narrow-minded Puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exultation of the rustic adventurer, 'Tam O'Shanter?' The poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. The reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the aspect of social cordiality—and while these elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within. I pity him who cannot perceive that in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there was a moral effect."

"When my father," writes Gilbert Burns, "feued his little property near Alloway Kirk, the wall of the churchyard had gone to ruin, and cattle had free liberty of pasture in it. My father, with two or three other neighbors, joined in an application to the

town council of Ayr, who were superiors of the adjoining land, for liberty to rebuild it, and raised by subscription a sum for en closing this ancient cemetery with a wall; hence he came to consider it his burial-place, and we learned that reverence for it people generally have for the burial-place of their ancestors. The following letter, sent by Burns to Captain Grose, deals with the witch stories that clustered round Alloway Kirk.

"Among the many witch stories I have heard relating to Alloway Kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three.

"Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind and bitter blasts of hail—in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in—a farmer, or a farmer's servant, was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough-irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighboring smithy. His way lay by the Kirk of Alloway, and being rather on the anxious lookout in approaching a place so well known to be a favorite haunt of the devil, and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering, through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which, on his nearer approach, plainly showed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan, or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine; but so it was, that he ventured to go up to—nay, into—the very Kirk. As luck would have it, his temerity came off unpunished.

"The members of the infernal junto were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or caldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c., for the business of the night. It was in for a penny, in for a pound, with the honest ploughman; so, without ceremony, he unhooked the caldron from off the fire, and pouring out its damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, *a living evidence of the truth of the story.*"

"Another story, which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows:—

"On a market-day, in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway-Kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

"Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the Kirk, yet as it is a well known fact, that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the Kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer, stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many of his acquaintance and neighborhood. How the gentleman was dressed, tradition does not say, but that the ladies were all in their smocks; and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purposes of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, 'Weel looppen Maggy wi' the short sark!' and, recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprang to seize him; but it was too late; nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way to her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tailless condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hours of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers not to stay too late in Ayr markets."

Nathaniel Hawthorne, in "Our Old Home," writes of Alloway Kirk: "A few steps ascend from the roadside, through a gate, into the old graveyard, in the midst of which stands the kirk. The edifice is wholly roofless, but the side-walls and gable-ends are quite entire, though portions of them are evidently modern restorations. Never was there a plainer little church, or one with smaller architectural pretension; no New England meeting-house has more simplicity in its very self, though poetry and fun have clambered and clustered so wildly over Kirk Alloway that it is difficult to see it as it actually exists. By the by, I do not understand why Satan and an assembly of witches should hold their revels within a consecrated precinct; but the weird scene has so established itself in the world's imaginative faith that it must be accepted as an authentic incident, in spite of rule and reason to the contrary. Possibly, some carnal minister, some priest of pious

aspect and hidden infidelity, had dispelled the consecration of the holy edifice by his pretence of prayer, and thus made it the resort of unhappy ghosts and sorcerers and devils. The interior of the kirk, even now, is applied to quite as impertinent a purpose as when Satan and the witches used it as a dancing-hall; for it is divided in the midst by a wall of stone-masonry, and each compartment has been converted into a family burial-place. The name on one of the monuments is Crawfurd; the other bore no inscription. It is impossible not to feel that these good people, whoever they may be, had no business to thrust their prosaic bones into a spot that belongs to the world, and where their presence jars with the emotions, be they sad or gay, which the pilgrim brings thither. They shut us out from our own precincts, too,—from that inalienable possession which Burns bestowed in free gift upon mankind, by taking it from the actual earth and annexing it to the domain of imagination; and here these wretched squatters have lain down to their long sleep, after barring each of the two doorways of the kirk with an iron grate! May their rest be troubled, till they rise and let us in!"—G. G.

ALLOWAY KIRK.

ON THE BIRTH OF A POSTHUMOUS CHILD,

BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILY DISTRESS.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1793.)

SWEET flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a prayer,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair.

November *hirples* o'er the lea, limps
Chill, on thy lovely form:
And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving show'r,
The bitter frost and snaw.

May He, the friend o' Woe and Want,
Who heals life's various *stounds*, pangs
Protect and guard the mother plant,
And heal her cruel wounds.

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn,
Now, feebly bends she, in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

["*November* 15*th*, 1790, (Birth). At Loudon Castle, Mrs. Henry, widow of James Henry, Esq. of Bernadean, of a son." Such is the announcement which led to the composition of these pathetic stanzas. We copy it from the pages of the *Scots Magazine;* but Mrs. Dunlop had intimated the circumstance to Burns in a letter, on reading which, the author himself says:—"I literally jumped with joy. I seized my gilt-headed Wangee rod, an instrument indispensably necessary, in my left hand, in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride, quick and quicker, out skipped I among the broomy banks of Nith to muse over my joy by retail. To keep within the bounds of prose was impossible . . . . . the sweet little fellow! almost extempore, I poured out to him the following verses."

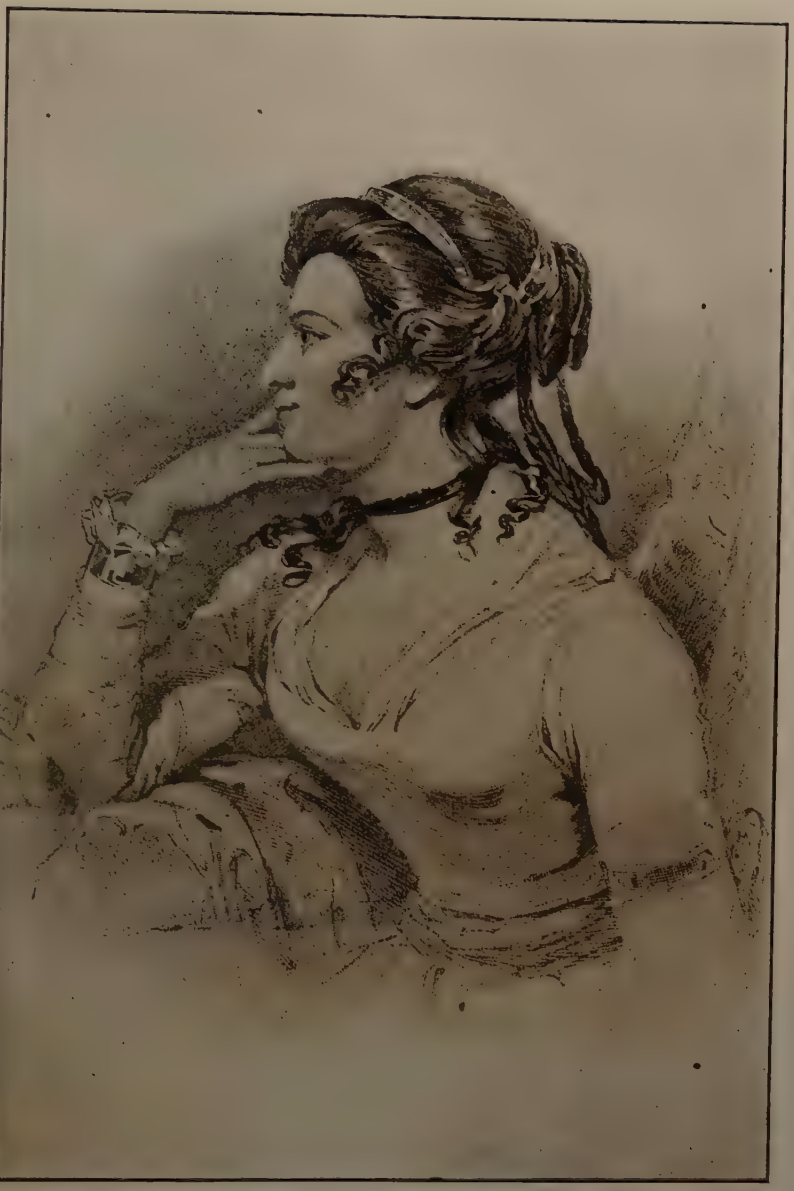
Susan, one of Mrs. Dunlop's daughters, had married a French gentleman named Henri (or Henry), of good birth and fortune, and the couple rented as a domicile, the castle of the Campbells at Loudon. On 22nd June 1790, the husband sank under the effects of a severe cold, leaving his wife pregnant. Such are the circumstances referred to in the author's heading of this poem. The "family distress" however did not end there: Mrs. Henri was induced to go to France, taking the child with her, to visit her late husband's relatives. She sickened and died. The child was taken care of by the grandfather, and ultimately became proprietor of the family estates.]

ELEGY ON THE LATE MISS BURNET OF MONBODDO.

(Currie, 1800.)

Life ne'er exulted in so rich a prize,
As Burnet, lovely from her native skies;
Nor envious death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Thy form and mind, sweet maid, can I forget?
In richest ore the brightest jewel set!
In thee, high Heaven above was truest shown,
As by His noblest work the Godhead best is known.



ELIZABETH BURNET

In vain ye flaunt in summer's pride, ye groves;
Thou crystal streamlet with thy flowery shore,
Ye woodland choir that chaunt your idle loves,
Ye cease to charm; Eliza is no more.

Ye heathy wastes, immix'd with reedy fens;
Ye mossy streams, with sedge and rushes stor'd;
Ye rugged cliffs, o'erhanging dreary glens,
To you I fly—ye with my soul accord.

Princes, whose cumb'rous pride was all their worth,
Shall venal lays their pompous exit hail,
And thou, sweet Excellence! forsake our earth,
And not a Muse with honest grief bewail?

We saw thee shine in youth and beauty's pride,
And Virtue's light, that beams beyond the spheres;
But, like the sun eclips'd at morning tide,
Thou left us, darkling in a world of tears.*

The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care;
So deckt the woodbine sweet yon aged tree;
So, from it ravish'd, leaves it bleak and bare.

["June 17th, 1790, At Braid Farm, in the neighborhood of Edinburgh, Miss Burnet of Monboddo."—*Scots Magazine Obituary.* The estate of Monboddo is in Kincardineshire, and there the father of this lady was born in 1714. By his marriage in 1760, to Miss Farquharson, he had one son and two daughters. The early death of Mrs. Burnet soon made Lord Monboddo a widower, and the son did not survive his mother many years. His eldest daughter married Kirkpatrick Williamson, Esq., keeper of the Outer House Rolls. Elizabeth, the youngest daughter, who forms the subject of the foregoing Elegy, was much attached to her father, and continued to keep his house till she died.

On returning to the deserted house in St. John Street, after the funeral, which took place from the summer lodging named in the

*The poem originally closed here.—J. H.

obituary, Mr. Williamson, to save the stricken parent's feelings, turned Miss Burnet's portrait with the face to the wall. When Lord Monboddo observed the picture thus reversed, he said, "Right, Williamson, let us now turn to Herodotus." His devotion to ancient literature kept him from sinking under the bereavement, and he survived his daughter nine years, dying at the age of eighty-five.

The earliest notice of the above tribute to the memory of Miss Burnet is contained in the poet's letter to Alexander Cunningham, dated 23rd January 1791. He says, "I have, these several months, been hammering at an elegy on the amiable and accomplished Miss Burnet. I have got, and can get no further than the following fragment, on which, please give me your strictures." The copy thus forwarded wanted the closing four lines—perhaps the finest stanza in the poem, which was added in a happy revising moment. A still earlier copy, now possessed by Henry Probasco, Esq., Cincinnati, Ohio, wants not only the closing stanza, but the two introductory ones which are in the Cunningham copy.]

LAMENT OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS,

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

(Edinburgh Ed., 1793.)

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
  On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
  Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
  And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
  That fast in durance lies.

Now *laverocks* wake the merry morn, larks
  Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
  Makes woodland echoes ring;
The *mavis* wild wi' mony a note, thrush
  Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
  Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the *slae:* sloe
The meanest kind in fair Scotland
May rove thae sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang.

I was the Queen o' bonie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly rase I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim Vengeance yet shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae:
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor th' balm that drops on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

O! soon, to me, may Summer suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair to me the Autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn?
And, in the narrow house of death,
Let Winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the Spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

[Burns was justly proud of these verses, which were composed prior to the close of February 1791. He then enclosed them with some other pieces to Dr. Moore, and told him that he began this ballad while he was busy with the *Percy Reliques*. He sent it about the same time to Mrs. Graham of Fintry, remarking thus concerning it, "Whether it is that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have in the enclosed ballad succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not, but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my Muse for a good while past."]

(On 25th April, 1791, the poet addressed a letter to Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, thanking her for the present of a valuable snuff-box, bearing on its lid a portrait of the unfortunate Mary, and along with the letter sent her a copy of this poem. Allan Cunningham says the poem was written at the request of this lady. Dr. Waddell points out that the reader will find a very beautiful counterpart of this Lament in Beranger's "*Adieux* de Marie Stuart," beginning:—

"Adieu, charmant pays de France,
Que je dois tant cherir!
Berceau de mon hereuse enfance,
Adieu! te quitter est mouir!"—J. H.)

THERE'LL NEVER BE PEACE TILL JAMIE COMES HAME.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

By yon Castle wa', at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, tho' his head it was grey;
And as he was singing, the tears doon came,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

The Church is in ruins, the State is in jars,
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars,
We dare na weel say't, but we ken wha's to blame,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
But now I *greet* round their green beds in the *yerd;* weep churchyard
It brak the sweet heart o' my faithfu' auld dame,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

Now life is a burden that bows me down,
Sin I *tint* my *bairns*, and he tint his crown; lost children
But till my last moments my words are the same,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

[On 11th March 1791, the poet transcribed this song in a lettet to his friend Alexander Cunningham of Edinburgh, as one of his recent compositions for Johnson's work, and thus wrote:—"If you like the air and the stanzas hit your fancy, you cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me, if by the charms of your delightful voice you would give my honest effusion to 'the memory of joys that are past' to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure."

SONG—OUT OVER THE FORTH.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

OUT over the Forth, I look to the north;
But what is the north and its Highlands to me?
The south nor the east *gie* ease to my breast, give
The far foreign land, or the wide rolling sea.

But I look to the west when I *gae* to rest, go
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For far in the west lives he I *loe* best, love
The man that is dear to my babie and me.

[In the same letter to Alexander Cunningham, of 11th March 1791, which contains, "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame," and "The Banks o' Doon," he transcribes the second stanza of this little song, at the conclusion of his epistle, thus:—"Good night to you, and sound be your sleep, and delectable your dreams. Apropos, how do you like this thought in a ballad I have just now on the tapis?

"I look to the west when I gae to rest," &c.

The words are identical with those in Johnson, although both Currie and Cromek print "lad" for *man*, in the last line. The original MS. sent to Johnson, is in the British Museum.]

THE BANKS O' DOON.

FIRST VERSION.

(Douglas, 1877.)

"Ellisland, 11th March 1791.—I have this evening sketched out a song which I have a good mind to send you. . . It is intended to be sung to a Strathspey reel of which I am very fond, called in Cumming's Collection, 'Ballindalloch's Reel,' and in others, 'Camdelmore.' It takes three stanzas of four lines each, to go through the whole tune."—*Excerpt from a letter to Alexander Cunningham.*

Sweet are the banks—the banks o' Doon,
The spreading flowers are fair,
And everything is blythe and glad,
But I am fu' o' care.
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my *fause* Luve was true: false
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For *sae* I sat, and sae I sang, so
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon, oft have
To see the woodbine twine;

And *ilka* bird sang o' its Luve, every
And sae did I o' mine:
Wi' lightsome heart I *pu'd* a rose, pulled
Upon its thorny tree;
But my fause Luver *staw* my rose, stole
And left the thorn wi' me:
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourished on the morn,
And sae was pu'd *or'* noon! ere

[The heroine of this affecting Song was Miss Peggy Kennedy, of Dalgarrock, a beautiful and accomplished young lady, and a relative of Gavin Hamilton, who fell a victim to the arts of McDowall of Logan, son of and heir to a rich Galloway landed proprietor. (See Young Peggy Blooms, p. 139, Vol. I.) After giving birth to a child in 1794, the lady entered a process of Declarator of marriage and legitimacy in behalf of herself and child, but died not long after, the victim of anguished feeling. In 1798 the Court of Session pronounced a judgment ordering £3000 to be paid to the daughter, but refusing the Declarator of marriage. Many persons of taste prefer this version, in respect to its superior simplicity and directness, to the more elaborate and more popular "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonie Doon."—J. H.]

THE BANKS O' DOON.

SECOND VERSION.

(CROMEK'S RELIQUES, 1808.)

[March 1791], "While here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country Inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a soger, and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound—'Auld Toon o' Ayr,' conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine. Here it is."—*Letter to John Ballantine, Esq., Ayr.*

YE flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?

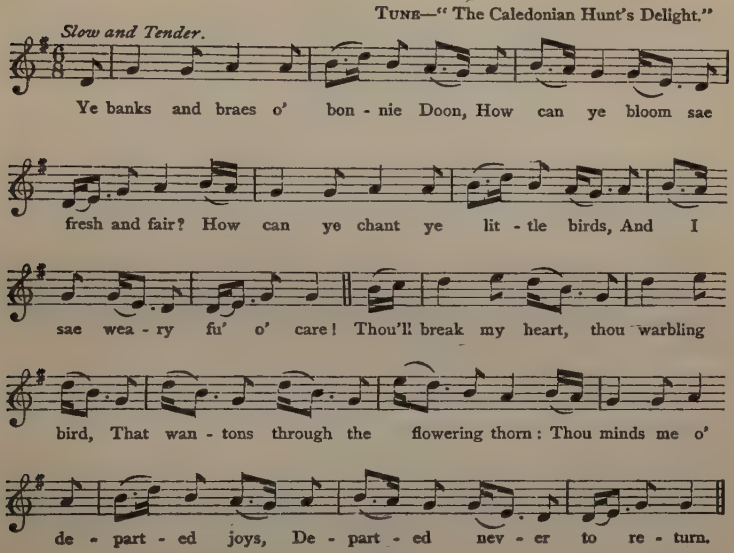
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I *sae fu'* o' care! so full
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my *fause* Luve was true. false
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine;
And *ilka* bird sang o' its Luve, every
And sae did I o' mine.
[Wi' lightsome heart I *pu'd* a rose, pulled
Upon a morn in June;
How like that rose my blooming morn,
Sae darkly set ere noon!]
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon its thorny tree;
But my fause Lover *staw* my rose, stole
And left the thorn wi' me.

[The author wrote to Alexander Cunningham, immediately under his first sketch of this song. "If the foregoing piece be worth your strictures, let me have them. For my own part, a thing that I have just composed always appears through a double portion of that partial medium in which an author will ever view his own works. I believe Novelty generally has something in it that inebriates the fancy, and not unfrequently dissipates and fumes away like other intoxications, and leaves the poor patient, as usual, with an aching heart. A striking instance of this might be adduced in the revolution of many a Hymeneal honeymoon."

Cromek has the following note to this song, in the justice of which we fully concur. "The reader will perceive that the measure of this copy of the 'Banks o' bonie Doon,' differs from that which is already published. Burns was obliged to adapt his words to a particular air (different in measure from that they were composed for), and in so doing he lost much of the simplicity and beauty which the song possesses in its original state."

The reader will understand that the melody eventually selected for this song, and which has caused its melting cadences, along with Burns's words, to be familiar in every land, was in the poet's days, known as "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight." It appears as follows:


Tune—"The Caledonian Hunt's Delight."
Slow and Tender.
Ye banks and braes o' bon - nie Doon, How can ye bloom sae
fresh and fair? How can ye chant ye lit - tle birds, And I
sae wea - ry fu' o' care! Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling
bird, That wan - tons through the flowering thorn: Thou minds me o'
de - part - ed joys, De - part - ed nev - er to re - turn.

THE BANKS O' DOON.*

THIRD VERSION.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

YE banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

* Third version of this song.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And *ilka* bird sang o' its Luve, every
And fondly sae did I o' mine;
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my *fause* Lover staw my rose, false
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

[This song, in its earlier form, was transmitted to Johnson to be set to a melody suitable for words in the common ballad-stanza, and Clarke, the musical editor of the *Museum*, having tried the proposed air, suggested the beautiful tune called "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight," as better suiting the sentiment of the words, provided two syllables could be added to every second line. Burns accordingly subjected the words to a slight re-modelling, and again forwarded the song to Johnson, who published it exactly as in the text, allied to the tune which has since become so popular.

Mr. James Miller, a clerk in the General Register House at Edinburgh, had the good luck to become the composer of that immortal melody by a mere random effort. Mr. Stephen Clarke directed him to touch only the black keys of the harpsichord, preserve some kind of rhythm, and he would infallibly produce a Scotch air. This fact is narrated at length by the poet in the Thomson Correspondence. Urbani, the musician, was not a little jealous of the popularity which this air attracted in connection with Burns's words, and he sung the song at several of his concerts to the old melody of "Todlin Hame," but failed to turn the current of popular favor to his innovation.]

(The melancholy circumstances on which all these three versions are based are indicated in the note to the earliest version, p. 25, *supra*.)—J. H.

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

(Edinburgh Ed., 1793.)

The wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods,
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream:

Beneath a *craigy* steep, a Bard, rocky
Laden with years and *meikle* pain, much
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom Death had all untimely ta'en.

He lean'd him to an ancient *aik*, oak
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years ;
His locks were bleachèd white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears !
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To Echo bore the notes alang.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques o' the vernal *queire !* choir
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honors o' the aged year !
A few short months, and, glad and gay
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e
But *nocht* in all revolving time nothing
Can gladness bring again to me.

"I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain ;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane ;
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom ;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And others plant them in my room.

"I've seen sae mony changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown :
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing, and unknown :

Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bear alane my *lade* o' care, load
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

"And last, (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay:
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing forever fled.

"Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought from Fortune's *mirkest* darkest
gloom.

"In Poverty's low barren vale,
Thick mists obscure, involv'd me round;
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found:
Thou found'st me, like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless bard and rustic song
Became alike thy fostering care.

"O! why has worth so short a date,
While villains ripen grey with time?
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime!

Why did I live to see that day—
A day to me so full of woe?
O! had I met the mortal shaft
That laid my benefactor low!

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee,[1] Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast[2] done for me!"

[On *27th January* 1791, died at Falmouth, on his return from Lisbon, whither he had gone in the search for health, James Earl of Glencairn, the amiable friend and patron of Burns. The poet put on mourning for the deceased, and designed, if possible, to attend his funeral in the family vault at Kilmaurs. On 19th March, Burns enclosed a rough copy of the poem to his lordship's factor, Mr. Alexander Dalziel. In the letter which accompanied it, he says:—"An author, by the time he has composed and corrected his work, has quite pared away all his powers of critical discrimination . . . . I had a packet of poetical bagatelles ready to send to Lady Betty, when I saw the fatal tidings in the newspaper. I see by the same channel that the honored remains of my noble patron are designed to be brought to the family burial place. Dare I trouble you to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to pay a tear to the last sight of my ever-revered benefactor? It will oblige me beyond expression."

To the sister of his lordship also, he enclosed a copy, and in his letter he says:—"If among my children I have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honor and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn!

"I was about to say, my lady, that if you think the poem may venture to see the light, I would, in some way or other, give it to the world."

We note the following variations:—

[1] good. [2] he has.

In relation to the two variations on the last stanza Sir James Coxe

wrote to Mr. Douglas, in 1876, saying:—"In the poem on the Earl of Glencairn, Burns wrote originally—

"I'll remember gude Glencairn, and a' that he has done for me,"

but in reading it to the Earl's sister or sisters, the epithet "Gude" was objected to and "great" proposed in its stead. Burns, however, felt that "great" was altogether inappropriate, and was placed in the dilemma of adhering to "gude," and giving offence where he wished to give pleasure, or violating his sense of what was right and fitting by adopting "great." Calling on Miss Leslie Baillie, he mentioned to her the difficulty he was in, when she suggested the dropping of both 'gude' and 'great,' and addressing the closing words to the Earl:—

"I'll remember thee, Glencairn, and a' that thou hast done for me."

This happy suggestion was at once adopted by Burns. My authority was Lady Coxe, the daughter of *Bonie Leslie*."]

LINES TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD, BART.,

SENT WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.

(EDINBURGH Ed., 1793.)

THOU, who thy honor as thy God rever'st,
Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought earthly fear'st,
To thee this votive offering I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The *Friend* thou valued'st, I, the *Patron* lov'd;
His worth, his honor, all the world approved:
We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
And tread the shadowy path to that dark world unknown.

[As the author has printed these lines in connection with the Lament for Glencairn, we do not separate the pieces, although an interval of several months occurred between the compositions.

Sir John, in a letter dated from Maybole on 16th October 1791, acknowledged receipt of a copy of the Lament, and of these complimentary lines to himself. He very orthodoxly observes as follows:—"I have always thought it most natural to suppose (and

it is a strong argument for a future existence), that worth and honor, when neglected here, shall, in a happier state beyond the grave, meet with their just reward, and temporal misfortunes shall receive an eternal recompense. Let us cherish this hope for our departed friend, and moderate our grief for the loss we have sustained, knowing that he cannot come to us, but we may go to him."

The poet's manuscript, originally forwarded to Sir John, is now in the British Museum, where, instead of the third and fourth lines of the author's improved text, we read as follows:

> "Witness the ardor of this votive lay,
> With streaming eyes and throbbing heart I pay."

The word "shadowy" in the closing line, is a farther improvement, which occurred to Burns while his poems were at the press. In his MS. the word is "dreary." He ordered the alteration to be made; but unfortunately the correction came too late to be effected in the edition of 1793, and in the next issue that matter was overlooked.]

CRAIGIEBURN WOOD.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

This song was composed on a passion which a Mr. Gillespie, a particular friend of mine, had for a Miss Lorimer, afterwards Mrs. Whelpdale. The young lady was born at Craigieburn Wood. The chorus is part of an old, foolish ballad.—*R. B. Glenriddell Notes.*

SWEET closes the ev'ning on Craigieburn Wood,
And blythely awakens the morrow;
But the pride o' the spring on the Craigieburn Wood
Can yield me nought but sorrow.

Chorus.—Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O to be lying beyond thee!
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
That's laid in the bed beyond thee!

I see the spreading leaves and flowers,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But pleasure they *hae nane* for me, have none
While care my heart is wringing.
Beyond thee, &c.

I can na tell, I *maun* na tell, must
I *daur na* for your anger; dare not
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.
Beyond thee, &c.

I see thee gracefu', straight and tall,
I see thee sweet and bonie;
But oh, what will my torment be,
If thou refuse thy Johnie!
Beyond thee, &c.

To see thee in another's arms,
In love to lie and languish,
'*Twad* be my *dead*, that will be seen, It would death
My heart wad burst wi' anguish
Beyond thee, &c.

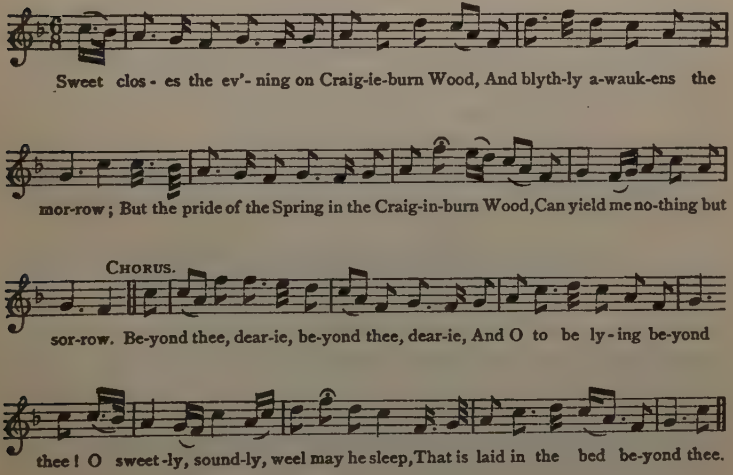
But Jeanie, say thou wilt be mine,
Say thou loes nane before me;
And a' my days o' life to come
I'll gratefully adore thee.
Beyond thee, &c.

[Craigieburn is a beautiful locality in the neighborhood of Moffat, where the parents of Jean Lorimer (afterwards the celebrated "Chloris" of Burns) resided, and where she was born in September, 1775. This song is the first of a long series of lyrics which the young woman's charms elicited from the muse of Burns, although, it was only a vicarious expression of passion felt by John Gillespie, a brother exciseman of Dumfries. He was smitten by the fascinations of the fair young beauty, and seems to have re-

quested the poet to plead for him in this fashion; but the wooing was not destined to be successful. Chambers mentions that the names of Jean Lorimer and John Gillespie were still (in 1856) to be seen inscribed on a pane of the poet's parlor window at Ellisland. The parents of the young woman, at the period when the song was composed, resided at Kemmis Ha' * on the Nith, near Kirkmahoe, and in the course of the poet's Excise avocations, he had frequent occasion to visit the Lorimers, who dealt in excisable commodities. Jean, the eldest daughter, was then but fifteen years old, but tall and womanly at her years.

George Thomson afterwards took a fancy for this song and prevailed on the author to make him an altered, if not amended, version of it, excluding the chorus. The melody seems to have been recovered by Burns, who had it noted down from the singing of a native of the district. This was probably done by Allan Masterton in the autumn of 1789, when he and Nicol spent their vacation in that quarter.

Mr. Stephen Clarke, the musical editor of the *Museum*, wrote the following note at the foot of the music-score of this song:—"There is no need to mention the chorus. The man that would attempt to sing a chorus to this beautiful air should have his throat cut to prevent him from doing it again." The air, as given in Johnson, is quite impracticable in the second part. George Thomson tried to modify it, but with no great success.


Sweet clos - es the ev'- ning on Craig-ie-burn Wood, And blyth-ly a-wauk-ens the
mor-row; But the pride of the Spring in the Craig-in-burn Wood, Can yield me no-thing but
Chorus.
sor-row. Be-yond thee, dear-ie, be-yond thee, dear-ie, And O to be ly-ing be-yond
thee! O sweet-ly, sound-ly, weel may he sleep, That is laid in the bed be-yond thee.

* Kemmis Hall is a corruption for Comyn's Hall, the place where Comyns "once held high command."—J. H.

THE BONIE WEE THING.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

Chorus.—Bonie wee thing, *cannie* wee thing, gentle
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel it* should tine.

WISHFULLY I look and languish
In that bonie face o' thine,
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.
Bonie wee thing, &c.

Wit and Grace, and Love, and Beauty,
In *ae* constellation shine; one
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
Bonie wee thing, &c.

[This admired song was, according to the author's own note, composed on his little idol—the 'charming, lovely Davies.' The lady is said to have been of English birth, and a relative of the Glenriddell family. Burns became acquainted with her during the last year of his residence at Ellisland, and besides making her the subject of another song and an epigram, two letters addressed to her appear in his correspondence.

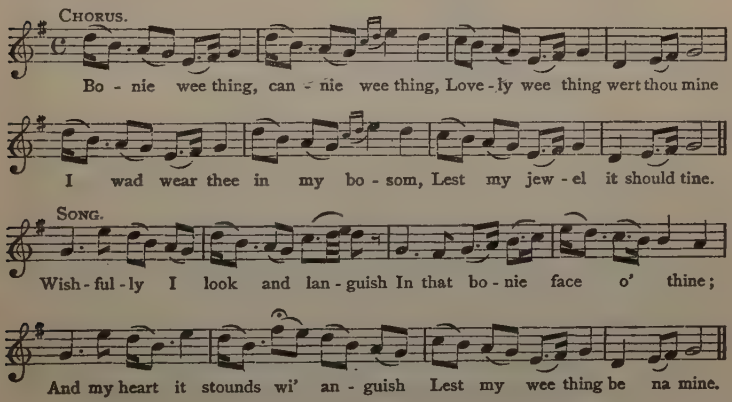
Allan Cunningham gives some affecting particulars of the private history of Miss Deborah Davies—for such was the lady's name—obtained from the information of her nephew. She was of small stature, but of exquisite form and beauty, and possessed more than an average share of mental graces. A Captain Delany had made himself agreeable to her by his attentions, and by writing verses to and concerning her. At length they came under marriage-engagements to each other; but delays ensued, and cold-

* Johnson reads "I should tine;" but the original MS. in the British Museum reads as in the text. In line second, Johnson has "was" instead of "wert" in the MS.

ness on his part at length became manifest. He joined his regiment abroad, and, with the exception of one formal letter, she never heard from him again. From some expressions in Burns's letters to her, it may be gathered that he had been made acquainted with this part of her story. She did not long survive the cruel blow thus inflicted on her hopes and affections. After her death, some verses that she had composed, and wrapped round her lover's miniature, were found among her papers. The following extract is worthy of preservation :—

"Next to Thyself, 'tis all on earth, thy 'Stella' dear doth hold;
The glass is clouded with my breath, and, as my bosom, cold:
That bosom, which so oft has glowed with Love and Friendship's name,
Where you the seed of Love first sowed, that kindled into flame:
You there neglected let it burn—it seized the vital part,
And left my bosom as an urn, to hold a broken heart."

The melody of this song, taken from Oswald's collection, is one of the most charming of the Scottish airs, and we here annex it.]


Chorus.
Bo - nie wee thing, can - nie wee thing, Love - ly wee thing wert thou mine
I wad wear thee in my bo - som, Lest my jew - el it should tine.
Song.
Wish - ful - ly I look and lan - guish In that bo - nie face o' thine;
And my heart it stounds wi' an - guish Lest my wee thing be na mine.

EPIGRAM ON MISS DAVIES,

ON BEING ASKED WHY SHE HAD BEEN FORMED SO LITTLE, AND MRS. A—— SO BIG.

(Stewart, 1801.)

Ask why God made the gem so small?
And why so huge the granite?—
Because God meant mankind should set
That higher value on it.

[This is what Allan Cunningham calls "a handsome apology for scrimpet stature." The epigram is said to have been uttered, and then inscribed on a window-pane of the principal Inn, at Moffat, on observing Miss Davies ride past in company with a lady of portly dimensions. Burns thought so well of it as to record it in the Glenriddell MS. Book, now at Liverpool.]

THE CHARMS OF LOVELY DAVIES.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O HOW shall I, unskilfu', try
The Poet's occupation?
The tunefu' powers, in happy hours,
That whisper inspiration;
Even they *maun* dare an effort mair — must
Than aught they ever gave us,
Ere they rehearse, in equal verse,
The charms o' lovely Davies.

Each eye, it cheers when she appears,
Like Phœbus in the morning,
When past the shower, and every flower
The garden is adorning:
As the wretch looks o'er Siberia's shore,
When winter-bound the wave is;
Sae droops our heart, when we maun part
Frae charming, lovely Davies.

Her smile 's a gift frae *'boon* the lift, — above
That maks us mair than princes;
A sceptred hand, a king's command,
Is in her darting glances;
The man in arms 'gainst female charms,
Even he her willing slave is,
He hugs his chain, and owns the reign
Of conquering, lovely Davies.

My Muse! to dream of such a theme,
Thy feeble powers surrender:
The eagle's gaze alone surveys
The sun's meridian splendor.
I wad in vain essay the strain,
The deed too daring brave is;
I'll drap the lyre, and mute admire
The charms o' lovely Davies.

[This is a very brilliant effort in the way of playful compliment, but it is not to be compared in earnestness to its predecessor, "Bonie Wee Thing." Burns was an adept in the composition of pieces in this style, where the measure is short and the rhymes rapid. Sentiment and pathos are excluded from such productions; but in his hands, wit and "pith o' sense" are never wanting. In sending the lady this piece, he seems to have felt a misgiving that its levity might be jarring to her chastened feelings. "So strongly am I interested," he writes, "in Miss Davies's fate and welfare in the serious business of life, amid its chances and changes, that to make her the subject of a silly ballad is downright mockery of their ardent feelings; 'tis like an impertinent jest to a dying friend."

He closes his letter very finely thus:—"There is a delicacy, a tenderness accompanying every view in which we can place lovely Woman, that are grated and shocked at the rude, capricious distinctions of Fortune. Woman is the blood-royal of life: let there be slight degrees of precedency among them, but let them be All sacred. Whether this last sentiment be right or wrong, I am not accountable: it is an original component feature of my mind." In the letter which enclosed "Bonie Wee Thing," he remarks: "When I meet with a person of my own heart, I positively can no more desist from rhyming on the impulse, than an Æolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air."]

WHAT CAN A YOUNG LASSIE DO WI' AN AULD MAN.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

WHAT can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?
Bad luck on the penny that tempted my *minnie* mother
To sell her puir Jenny for *siller* an' *lan'!* money land
Bad luck on the penny that tempted my minnie
To sell her puir Jenny for siller an' lan'.

He's always compleenin frae mornin to eenin,
He *hoasts* and he *hirples* the weary day lang; coughs / limps
He's *doylt* and he's *dozin*, his blude it is frozen,—stupified / torpid
O dreary's the night wi' a *crazy* auld man! dilapidated
He's doylt and he's dozin, his blude it is frozen,
O dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man.

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he cankers,
I never can please him do a' that I can;
He's peevish an' jealous o' a' the young fellows,—
O *dool* on the day I met wi' an auld man! woe
He's peevish an' jealous o' a' the young fellows,
O dool on the day I met wi' an auld man.

My auld auntie Katie upon me taks pity,
I'll do my endeavor to follow her plan;
I'll cross him an' wrack him, until I heartbreak him,
And then his auld brass 'ill buy me a new pan,*
I'll cross him an' wrack him, until I heartbreak him,
And then his auld brass 'ill buy me a new pan.

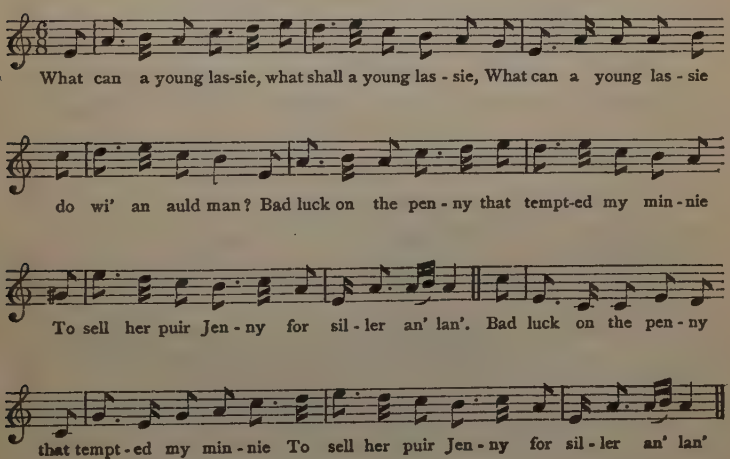
*His wealth will buy me a new husband.—J. H.

"What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?"

[However much the advice, here given by "auld auntie Katie" to her disconsolate niece, be disapproved of on Christian principles, this song is certainly in Burns's best manner, and one is apt to wonder why it is never sung by our lyric exponents of the bard. We suspect that this neglect has arisen from the very awkward setting of the music attached to it in the *Museum* and other collections, where it is hopelessly disarranged, and wants that "flow" which is so essential to the popularity of a tune. We suppose it to be of Irish origin, although it is given as a Scots air in Oswald's sixth Book. Its title is quoted in Durfey's "Pills," 1703. The phrase, "his auld brass 'ill buy me a new pan," is taken from the ancient song "Auld Rob Morris."

The Author's MS. of this song is in the British Museum, and below it he has noted the following directions to Johnson—"Dr. Blacklock's set of the tune is bad; I here enclose a better. You may put Dr. B.'s song after these verses, or you may leave it out, as you please. It has some merit, but it is miserably long."

We invite the attention of the musical reader to the annexed arrangement and set of the melody, as well fitted to give effect to the characteristic words of Burns.]


What can a young las-sie, what shall a young las - sie, What can a young las - sie
do wi' an auld man? Bad luck on the pen - ny that tempt-ed my min - nie
To sell her puir Jen - ny for sil - ler an' lan'. Bad luck on the pen - ny
that tempt - ed my min - nie To sell her puir Jen - ny for sil - ler an' lan'

THE POSIE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O LUVE will venture in where it daur na weel be seen,
O luve will venture in, where wisdom ance hath been;
But I will doun yon river rove, amang the wood sae green,
And a' to *pu'* a *Posie* to my ain dear May. pull nosegay

The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear;
For she's the pink o' womankind, and blooms without a peer,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

I'll pu' the budding rose, when Phœbus peeps in view,
For it's like a balmy kiss o' her sweet, bonie mou;
The hyacinth's for constancy wi' its unchanging blue,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

The lily it is pure, and the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity and unaffected air,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

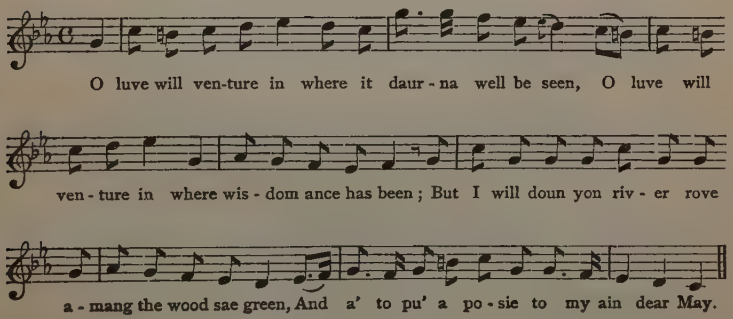
The hawthorn I will pu', wi' its locks o' siller gray,
Where, like an aged man, it stands at break o' day;
But the songster's nest within the bush I winna tak away,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

The woodbine I will pu', when the e'ening star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew shall be her een sae clear;
The violet's for modesty, which weel she *fa's* becomes to wear,
And a' to be a Posie to my ain dear May.

I'll tie the Posie round wi' the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast, and I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life the band shall ne'er remove,
And this will be a Posie to my ain dear May.

[In his Glenriddell notes, the poet mentions that he took down the air and the old words of this song from the singing of a country girl. That "country girl," he afterwards explained to George Thomson, was no other than Mrs. Burns, who was very fond of giving vocal effect to the present words with her expressive "woodnote wild." It is one of the loveliest and most everlastingly fresh of all Burns's lyrics; and yet how seldom is it heard either in the concert room, or at home, when the song goes round the young circle.

The phrase "my ain dear May," means "my ain dear maid;" May, in short, being a contraction of Mysie or Marian, common in ballad poetry as a name for its heroines—hence the "Maid-Marian" of Robin Hood. The melody, taken down from Jean Armour's singing, is very beautiful, and Burns is quite right in holding that it contains within it the outline of the popular air, "Roslin Castle." In the *Museum*, this song is placed on the page opposite "The Banks o' Doon," and it seems now certain that both of these charming lyrics were produced about the same time. We append the music.]


O luve will ven-ture in where it daur-na well be seen, O luve will
ven-ture in where wis-dom ance has been; But I will doun yon riv-er rove
a-mang the wood sae green, And a' to pu' a po-sie to my ain dear May.

ON GLENRIDDELL'S FOX BREAKING HIS CHAIN.

A FRAGMENT, 1791.

*(BRIGHT'S GLENRIDDELL MSS., 1874.)

THOU, Liberty, thou art my theme;
Not such as idle poets dream,
Who trick thee up a heathen goddess
That a fantastic cap and rod has;
Such stale conceits are poor and silly;
I paint thee out, a Highland filly,
A sturdy, stubborn, handsome dapple,
As sleek's a mouse, as round's an apple,
That when thou pleasest can do wonders;
But when thy luckless rider blunders,
Or if thy fancy should demur there,
Wilt break thy neck ere thou go further.

These things premised, I sing—a Fox
Was caught among his native rocks,
And to a dirty kennel chained,
How he his liberty regained.

Glenriddell! a Whig without a stain,
A Whig in principle and grain,
Could'st thou enslave a free-born creature,
A native denizen of Nature?
How could'st thou, with a heart so good,
(A better ne'er was sluiced with blood)
Nail a poor devil to a tree,
That ne'er did harm to thine or thee?

---

*This Glenriddell MSS. which contained many of Burns pieces already published, several never before published, was possessed, in 1874, by a Mr. Bright, of Liverpool, who printed for private circulation five hundred copies.

The staunchest Whig Glenriddell was,
Quite frantic in his country's cause;
And oft was Reynard's prison passing,
And with his brother-Whigs canvassing
The Rights of Men, the powers of Women,
With all the dignity of Freemen.

Sir Reynard daily heard debates
Of Princes', Kings', and Nations' fates,
With many rueful, bloody stories
Of Tyrants, Jacobites, and Tories:
From liberty how angels fell,
That now are gally-slaves in hell;
How Nimrod first the trade began
Of binding Slavery's chains on Man;
How fell Semiramis—G—d d-mn her!
Did first with sacrilegious hammer,
(All ills till then were trivial matters)
For Man dethron'd forge hen-peck fetters;
How Xerxes, that abandoned Tory,
Thought cutting throats was reaping glory,
Until the stubborn Whigs of Sparta
Taught him great Nature's Magna Charta;
How mighty Rome her fiat hurl'd
Resistless o'er a bowing world,
And, kinder than they did desire,
Polish'd mankind with sword and fire;
With much, too tedious to relate,
Of ancient and of modern date,
But ending still, how Billy Pitt
(Unlucky boy!) with wicked wit,
Has gagg'd old Britain, drain'd her coffer,
As butchers bind and bleed a heifer.

Thus wily Reynard, by degrees,
In kennel listening at his ease,

Suck'd in a mighty stock of knowledge,
As much as some folks at a College;
Knew Britain's rights and constitution,
Her aggrandisement, diminution,
How fortune wrought us good from evil;
Let no man, then, despise the Devil,
As who should say, 'I ne'er can need him,'
Since we to scoundrels owe our freedom.

* * * *

[This is recorded in the author's autograph, in the Glenriddell volume of poetry preserved at Liverpool. In that collection, down to March 1791, an amanuensis had been employed to extend the larger pieces; but from that date, the poems are in the handwriting of Burns. About the end of the same month, the poet's horse stumbled and fell with him, by which mishap his right arm was fractured; but not so seriously as to prevent his use of the pen after the first week of April had elapsed.

A good deal has been said and written about the assistance Burns received in the finishing of his lyrics through submitting them to the singing of a person named Kirsty Kirkpatrick, who lived in the parish of Closeburn, and was married to a mason, named Flint. The late Professor Gillespie of St. Andrews, in 1829 recorded his reminiscences of that fact in the "Edinburgh Literary Journal," thus:—"When a school-boy at Wallace-hall Academy, I saw Burns's horse tied by the bridle to the *sneck* of a cottage-door in the neighborhood of Thornhill, and I lingered for sometime listening to the songs which, seated in an arm-chair by the fireside, Burns was earnestly hearing sung. The songstress was a Mrs. Flint. She was neither pretty nor witty, but had a pipe of the most overpowering pitch, and a taste for song."

The late Sir James Stuart Menteith of Closeburn, who had conversed with "Kirsty" on this subject, communicated the following note to Chambers:—"When Burns dwelt at Ellisland, he was accustomed, after composing any of his beautiful songs, to pay Kirsty a visit, that he might hear them sung by her. He often stopped her in the course of singing, when he found any word harsh and grating to his ear, and substituted one more melodious and pleasing."

Kirsty Flint died in 1836, at the age of 71. It must not, however, be lost sight of, that Burns was also much indebted in this respect to the "wood-note wild" of his own Jean.]

POEM ON PASTORAL POETRY.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

HAIL, Poesie! thou Nymph reserv'd!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerv'd
Frae common sense, or sunk enerv'd
'Mang heaps o' *clavers;* nonsense
And och! o'er aft thy *joes* hae starv'd, wooers
'Mid a' thy favors!

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin *skelp* alang career
To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd sang
But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, *till* him *rives** to drags
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballads, Maro's catches;
Squire Pope but *busks* his *skinklin* adorns wishy-washy patches
O' heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
That ape their betters.

* Little Pope the hunchback to himself drags.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air,
And rural grace;
And, wi' the far-fam'd Grecian, share
A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish *callan!* boy
There's ane; come *forrit*, honest Allan! * forward
Thou need na *jouk* behint the *hallan;* dodge partition
A *chiel* sae clever! youth
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tantallan,†
But thou 's for ever.

Thou paints auld Nature to *the nines*, perfection
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae *gowden* stream thro' myrtles twines, golden
Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell!

In *gowany* glens thy burnie strays, daisied
Where bonie lasses bleach their *claes*, clothes
Or trots by hazelly *shaws* and *braes*, woods hills
Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays,
At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are Nature's sel';
Nae bombast *spates* o' nonsense swell; floods
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spell
O' witchin love,
That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

* Allan Ramsay.—J. H.
† A strong fortress on a high sea-rock in East Lothian.

[The authorship of this excellent poem is involved in some uncertainty. It was found in the hand-writing of Burns after his decease, and printed by Dr. Currie without remark. Gilbert Burns expressed his doubts about it, while Cunningham in 1834 contended that several of the stanzas bear that Burns-stamp which no imitator can counterfeit. Chambers, in 1838 expressed his belief that it might be the composition of Fergusson or of Dr. Beattie; but he had "scarcely a doubt that it is *not* by the Ayrshire bard."

In 1842, Cunningham was engaged to edit a fresh edition of Burns's works for George Virtue the publisher, in which he took Chambers to task in the following passage,—"I can little share in the feelings with which such pieces as the following have been intruded into the charmed circle of Burns's poetry—

Lines on the Ruins of Lincluden College,
Verses on the destruction of the Woods of Drumlanrig,
Verses written in the woods of Aberfeldy,
The Tree of Liberty.

There are eleven stanzas in this last production, of which, the *best*, compared with 'A man's a man for a' that' of Burns, sounds like a cracked pipkin against the heroic clang of a Damascus blade. And as to the 'Poem on Pastoral Poetry,' though Robert Chambers declares that he has scarcely a doubt that it is *not* by the Ayrshire bard, I must print it as his, for I have no doubt on the subject. The second, fourth and concluding verses resemble the verses of Beattie as little as the cry of the eagle resembles the chirp of the wren!"]

(To the above we only add that we do not know one, in all the bead-roll of Scottish poets, who could have given us the exquisite natural picture in the second last stanza save Burns; and surely

"That sweet spell o' witchin' love,
That charm that can the strongest quell
The sternest move"

is in his own peculiar manner. It is to be remembered that by the time this poem was presumably produced Burns was beginning to write unequally.—J. H.)

VERSES ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WOODS NEAR DRUMLANRIG.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL'S ED., 1835.)

As on the banks of winding Nith,
  Ae smiling simmer morn I stray'd,
And traced its bonie holms and haughs,*
  Where *linties* sang and lammies play'd, linnets
I sat me down upon a craig,
  And drank my fill o' fancy's dream,
When from the eddying deep below,
  Up rose the genius of the stream.

Dark, like the frowning rock, his brow,
  And troubled, like his wintry wave,
And deep, as *sughs* the boding wind wails
  Amang his caves, the sigh he gave—
"And come ye here, my son," he cried,
  "To wander in my *birken* shade? birchen
To muse some favorite Scottish theme,
  Or sing some favorite Scottish maid?"

"There was a time, it's *nae lang syne*, not long ago
  Ye might hae seen me in my pride,
When a' my banks sae bravely saw
  Their woody pictures in my tide;
When hanging beech and spreading elm
  Shaded my stream sae clear and cool;
And stately oaks their twisted arms
  Threw broad and dark across the pool;"

* These words are nearly synonymous, both meaning level land by the side of a stream, yet to a farmer there is a shade of difference. The haugh is not so necessarily close on a river.—J. H.

"When, *glinting* thro' the trees, appear'd — glancing
The wee white cot *aboon* the mill, — above
And peacefu' rose its *ingle reek*, — hearth-fire smoke
That, slowly curling, *clamb* the hill. — climbed
But now the cot is bare and cauld,
Its leafy *bield* for ever gane, — shelter
And scarce a stinted *birk* is left — birch
To shiver in the blast *its lane*." — alone

"Alas!" quoth I, "what ruefu' chance
Has *twin'd* ye o' your stately trees? — bereft
Has laid your rocky bosom bare—
Has stripp'd the *cleeding* aff your braes? — covering
Was it the bitter eastern blast,
That scatters blight in early spring?
Or was't the *wil' fire* scorch'd their boughs, — lightning
Or canker-worm wi' secret sting?"

"Nae eastlin blast," the sprite replied;
"It blaws na here sae fierce and *fell*, — cruel
And on my dry and halesome banks
Nae canker-worms get leave to dwell:
Man! cruel man!" the genius sighed—
As through the cliffs he sank him down—
"The worm that gnawed my bonie trees,
That reptile wears a Ducal crown."

[On no reliable evidence, except what is conveyed to the reader by the force and beauty of the lines, can it be demonstrated that this is a production of Burns. It first appeared in print in the Scots Magazine for Feb. 1803, where we are told in a note that the verses were found in Burns's hand-writing, pasted on the back of a window-shutter in an inn or toll-house, near the scene of desolation. It is said also that the piece was well-known in the district by oral rehearsal long before it was printed in the periodical named. Allan Cunningham has condemned his brother-minstrel William Motherwell for placing this effusion "within the charmed circle of Burns's poetry;" but in this instance we commend Motherwell for his superior taste and judgment.

We know not on what ground the year 1795 has been set down by some editors as the probable date of this poem. We have good reason for claiming 1791 as the proper date. The poet's detestation of the character of the Duke of Queensberry has been sufficiently displayed to the reader, both in the text and notes of the Election Ballads. But we give to the public in the Prose portion of this Edition, a very conciliatory letter addressed by Burns to his Grace in 1793, which justifies us in giving an earlier date to the bitter verses in the text.]

(The Duke's object in felling the trees on his beautiful estates —for the woods around Neidpath in Peeblesshire shared the same fate — was to raise money to provide a princely dowry for the Countess of Yarmouth, his *supposed* natural daughter. The mother of this lady had more than one string to her bow; for she levied similar "black mail" upon another member of the aristocracy, Sir John Selwyn, and it is said she was a woman of such wonderful tact, and had both of the venerable rakes (who were equally eager after the honor of the paternity) so thoroughly under control, that she gave them to understand that he who most richly endowed the offspring should enjoy the dubious honor. Queensberry, by the reckless sacrifice, which Burns deplores, won the day. This sacrifice he made the more readily because he detested the Buccleuch family who were to inherit his estates, they being too respectable to permit themselves to hold intercourse with the old *roué*—J. H.)

THE GALLANT WEAVER.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

WHERE Cart rins rowin to the sea,
By mony a flower and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me,
He is a gallant Weaver.
O I had wooers aught or nine,
They *gied* me rings and ribbons fine; gave
And I was fear'd my heart wad *tine*, be lost
And I gied it to the Weaver.

My daddie sign'd my *tocher-band*, dowry-bond
To gie the lad that has the land,

But to my heart I'll add my hand,*
And give it to the Weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
While bees delight in opening flowers,
While corn grows green in summer showers,
I love my gallant Weaver.

[In connection with a song given at p. 148, Vol. II., "To the Weaver's gin ye go," we have suggested that the poet may have composed it as a humorous reference to a portion of Jean Armour's history in 1786, when she was sent to Paisley to keep her out of his way. The same observation will apply to the present very admirable song.

George Thomson coveted this song for his collection; but he spoiled it by substituting "Sailor" for *Weaver*, in every fourth line; and, apparently ill-satisfied with the melody to which the song is set in the *Museum*—"The Weaver's March"—he selected another air for it, called "The auld wife ayont the fire." Neither of these melodies are of consequence enough to justify repetition here.]

(Mr. Douglas's suggestion that this song has reference to Jean's alleged flirtation with "Robie" Wilson may be well-founded—or it may not. If the fact is as he suggests, then Burns made a considerable draught on the license granted to poets when he spoke of Jean's father signing a "tocher-band" in favor of "the lad that has the land." Armour was not in a temper to sign such a bond, and Burns had not a rood of land.—J. H.)

EPIGRAM AT BROWNHILL INN.

(CHAMBERS, 1838.)

At Brownhill we always get dainty good cheer,
And plenty of bacon each day in the year;
We've a' thing that's nice, and mostly in season,
But why always Bacon—come tell me the reason?

[This Inn, three miles south of Thornhill, on the road near Ellisland, was a convenient resting-place for the poet on his home-

---

"And in the lustre of her youth, she gave
Her hand, with her heart in it, to Francesco."—*Rogers' Italy.*

ward journey in some of his Excise rounds. The Estate of Closeburn had been purchased in 1773, by the Rev. James Stuart Menteith, Rector of Barrowby in Lincolnshire, who appointed a gentleman named William Stewart to be resident factor of his Dumfriesshire property. Mr. Bacon, the landlord of Brownhill Inn, was married to a sister of the factor, and Burns contracted some intimacy with the family during the period of his occupation of Ellisland.

An English commercial traveller communicated the above epigram and relative anecdote to Chambers, who has recorded that his informant having one day rested for dinner at Brownhill found himself in the company of Burns. The principal dish on the table was bacon and beans, and the Innkeeper, as was his wont, dined with the visitors, who seemed to feel that they had rather too much of the host's presence. During an interval when he left the room to see after a fresh supply of toddy, Burns was called upon for one of those impromptu verses which he was famous for producing, as occasion suggested, and he immediately uttered the above riddle which afforded much amusement, and was not hard to solve.

Mr. Bacon continued to keep the same Inn till his death in 1825, when at a sale of his effects, a plainly mounted horn snuff-box, which he had received from Burns, brought five pounds.]

YOU'RE WELCOME, WILLIE STEWART.

(LOCKHART'S LIFE OF BURNS, 1829.)

Chorus.—You're welcome, Willie Stewart,
You're welcome, Willie Stewart,
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half sae welcome's thou art!

Come, bumpers high, express your joy,
The bowl we maun renew it,
The tappet hen,* gae bring her *ben*, in
To welcome Willie Stewart,
You're welcome, Willie Stewart, &c.

* Literally a hen with a large bright comb. The term was in former days applied, figuratively, to a large measure for whisky.—J. H.

May foes be strang, and friends be slack,
Ilk action, may he rue it,
May woman on him turn her back
That wrangs thee, Willie Stewart!
You're welcome, Willie Stewart, &c.

[The original of this little song was inscribed by the poet himself on a crystal tumbler. The relic was acquired by Sir Walter Scott, and is still preserved at Abbotsford. The subject of the verses was the factor at Closeburn, mentioned in the preceding note. He died in 1812. He had an interesting daughter, Mary Stewart, whom Burns celebrated in a somewhat similar strain, and forwarded the verses to Johnson for publication, united to the Jacobite air, "You're welcome, Charlie Stewart." It has not been explained why the name Mary was converted into "Polly."]

LOVELY POLLY STEWART.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

Chorus.—O lovely Polly Stewart,
O charming Polly Stewart,
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half so fair as thou art!

The flower it blaws, it fades, it fa's,
And art can ne'er renew it;
But worth and truth, eternal youth
Will gie to Polly Stewart.
O lovely Polly Stewart, &c.

May he whase arms shall fauld thy charms
Possess a leal and true heart!
To him be given to ken the heaven
He grasps in Polly Stewart!
O lovely Polly Stewart, &c.

[The "charming Polly," having been born in 1775 could be only about sixteen years old when she became a theme for the Muse of Burns. Her after-career in life was not an enviable one. She married her cousin, by whom she had three sons: he fell into some scrape which compelled him to abscond, and "Polly" afterwards contracted a quasi-matrimonial alliance with a man named Welsh, but as she did not live happily with him, a separation soon took place. In 1806, she resided in Maxwelton with her father, who was no longer factor at Closeburn. Polly there picked up acquaintance with a Swiss soldier named Fleitz, with whom she went abroad. After many wanderings she at length died at Florence in 1847.

The chorus words of this song are still to be seen inscribed with the poet's diamond-pen, on a window-pane of the upper parlor of the Globe Inn, Dumfries.]

FRAGMENT—DAMON AND SYLVIA.

Tune—"The Tither Morn."

(ALDINE ED., 1839.)

YON wandering rill that marks the hill,
And glances o'er the *brae*, Sir, hill
Slides by a bower, where mony a flower
Sheds fragrance on the day, Sir;
There Damon lay with Sylvia gay,
To love they thought no crime, Sir,
The wild birds sang, the echoes rang,
While Damon's pulse beat time, Sir.

[The foregoing sketch is introduced in Pickering's third volume, and also in Cunningham's Edition (one volume octavo). The author's manuscript of it is now in possession of Lord Dalhousie, and is identical with the version given above with the exception of one word in the closing line, which it is judged better not to restore.

These eight lines form the central portion of a completed production of Burns, entitled an "Ode to Spring," which appears in a letter addressed to George Thomson, dated early in January 1795. It appears in the same letter in which he transcribed his world-famous "A man's a man for a' that." He begins by lamenting

that though a few of his songs may please, yet originality is such a coy feature in composition, that in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, that characteristic must entirely disappear. "We poetic folks," he writes, "have, for instance, been describing the Spring for these three thousand years; and as the Spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c., of these said rhyming folks. To wander a little from my first design, which was to give you a new song, just hot from the mint, give me leave to squeeze in a clever anecdote of my *Spring* originality:—

"Some years ago when I was young, and by no means the saint I am now, I was looking over, in company with a *belle-lettre* friend, a Magazine 'Ode to Spring,' when my friend fell foul of the recurrence of the same thoughts, and offered me a bet that it was impossible to produce an Ode to Spring on an original plan. I accepted it, and pledged myself to bring in the verdant fields, the budding flowers, the crystal streams, the melody of the groves, and a love-story into the bargain; and yet be original. Here follows the piece—and wrote to music too!"

ODE TO SPRING.

Tune—'The Tither Morn.'

"When maukin bucks at early ——"

(Mr. Douglas, to whom we are indebted for the main portion of the foregoing note, judged it better to withhold the ode, and, in doing so, we think he acted judiciously, and, therefore, follow his example.

"The tither morn when I forlorn," to the tune of which the ode was set, is given in Johnson's fourth volume, and has hitherto been generally regarded as a production of Burns, appearing as such in several standard editions of his works. It was really written, Mr. Douglas tells us, before Burns was born, being given, with the music, in an old English collection under the title of "The Surprise, a favorite Scots song," verbatim as it appears in the *Museum*, to which Burns seems to have contributed it without saying where he got it. The merit of the piece, and the fact that he did not expressly disclaim it, no doubt led to the belief that he was the author; but the way in which it is referred to in his letter to Johnson of January 1795, sufficiently indicates that an old song bearing this title was known to him at least. —J. H.)

JOHNIE LAD, COCK UP YOUR BEAVER.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

WHEN first my brave Johnie lad came to the town,
He had a blue bonnet that wanted the crown;
But now he has gotten a hat and a feather,
Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your beaver!

Cock up your beaver, and cock it *fu' sprush*, full smart
We'll over the border, and *gie* them a brush; give
There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour,
Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your beaver!

[The second stanza only of this little fragment can be considered as the work of Burns. The original was a London production framed in ridicule of the Scotch settlers who made their way into England after James VI. of Scotland succeeded to the throne of Queen Elizabeth. The tune it is set to in the *Museum*, is taken from Playford's "Dancing Master" 1657, and a rude fragment of the words is preserved in Herd's Collection which Burns dressed up for Johnson.]

MY EPPIE MACNAB.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O SAW ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
She's down in the yard, she's kissin the laird,
She *winna* come hame to her *ain* Jock Rab. will not own

O come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab;
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab;
Whate'er thou hast dune, be it late, be it sune,
Thou's welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
She let's thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her ain Jock Rab.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab!
As light as the air, and as *fause* as thou's fair, false
Thou's broken the heart o' thy ain Jock Rab.

[This was composed as a substitute for old words which, the poet tells us, "had more wit than decency." The melody is preserved in Book VI. of Oswald's "Pocket Companion," and is very plaintive and expressive in character. Burns afterwards reconstructed, without improving, this song for Thomson's collection, suited to the air "When she cam ben she bobbit."]

ALTHO' HE HAS LEFT ME.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

ALTHO' he has left me for greed o' the *siller*, cash
I dinna envy him the gains he can win;
I rather wad bear a' the *lade* o' my sorrow, load
Than ever hae acted sae faithless to him.

[These four lines by Burns were added in the process of retouching an old song for Johnson which first appeared in Herd's Collection, entitled, "I'll never lay a' my love upon ane," in which occurs the following pretty verse:—

"I couldna get sleepin' yestreen for weepin,
The tears trickled down like *spates* o' rain; floods
Had I no got grutten,* my heart wad hae broken;
It's sair to feel fond whare ane's no lo'ed again.
But, since he has left me, may pleasure *gae* wi' him! go
It's never be he that shall *gar* me complain: make
I'll cheer up my heart that *I'se* yet get another, I shall
That's worth a' the luve I can lay upon ane."]

* Had I not been able to weep.—J. H.

MY *TOCHER'S* THE JEWEL. Fortune

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O *meikle* thinks my luve o' my beauty, much
And meikle thinks my luve o' my kin;
But little thinks my luve I ken *brawlie* perfectly
My tocher's the jewel has charms for him.
It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree,
It's a' for the hiney he'll cherish the bee,
My laddie's sae meikle in luve wi' the siller,
He canna hae luve to spare for me.

Your proffer o' luve's an *airle-penny*, earnest-penny
My tocher's the bargain ye wad buy;
But an ye be crafty, I am cunnin,
Sae ye wi' anither your fortune may try.
Ye're like to the *timmer* o' yon rotten wood, timber
Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
And ye'll crack your credit wi' mair nor me.

[The four closing lines and also the fifth and sixth lines of the first stanza of this song are old; the remainder is the poet's own. In 1787 he included the old fragment among several others, chiefly of the ballad kind, which he transcribed for Mr. Wm. Tytler of Woodhouselee, as "samples of the old pieces that are still to be found among our peasantry in the West." He noted that the fragmentary lines referred to were sung to the tune "Bonie Dundee;" but in sending the present song to Johnson he directed it to be set to an air in Gow's Collection, called "Lord Elcho's Favorite." The tune had appeared originally in Oswald's Collection, as a jig, called "The Highway to Edinburgh," and Gow, by changing the time, converted it into a plaintive air, thereby restoring somewhat of its original character; for as Burns correctly observes, "it is notoriously taken from 'The Muckin o' Geordie's Byre.'" He tells Johnson not to name the tune 'Lord Elcho's Favorite,' but let "it just pass for the tune of this song, and a beautiful tune it is."

This was a favorite song with Mr. John Templeton the vocalist, who sung it with great effect in his entertainments.]

O FOR ANE AN' TWENTY, TAM.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

Chorus.—AN' O for ane an' twenty, Tam!
And hey, sweet ane an' twenty, Tam!
I'll learn my kin a rattlin sang,
An' I saw ane an' twenty, Tam.

They *snool* me sair, and *haud* me down, snub hold
An' *gar* me look like *bluntie*, Tam; make squelched
But three short years will soon wheel roun',
An' then comes ane an' twenty, Tam.
An' O for, &c.

A *glieb* o' lan', a *claut o' gear*, piece deal of cash
Was left me by my Auntie, Tam;
At kith or kin I need na *spier*, ask consent
An' I saw ane an' twenty, Tam.
An' O for, &c.

They'll hae me wed a wealthy *coof*, blockhead
Tho' I mysel' hae plenty, Tam;
But, hear'st thou laddie! there's my *loof*, hand
I'm thine at ane an' twenty, Tam.
An' O for, &c.

[Here the playful comic genius of Burns is most happily displayed. The song speaks to the heart of man and woman of every tongue and kindred. A maiden of eighteen has a handsome tocher waiting for her when she shall reach her majority: a wealthy suitor asks her hand; but she reserves that for the lad who has already secured her heart, and the avaricious "coof" is rejected.]

"I'd rather take *Tam*, wi' his staff in his hand,
Before I'd hae Sandy wi' houses and land."*

---

* Chambers quotes Stenhouse to the effect that the song had a real origin.—J. H.

THOU FAIR ELIZA.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792).

TURN again, thou fair Eliza![1]
Ae kind blink before we part; one
Rue on thy despairing lover, have ruth
Can'st thou break his faithfu' heart?
Turn again, thou fair Eliza!
If to love thy heart denies,
Oh, in pity hide the sentence
Under friendship's kind disguise!

Thee, sweet maid, hae I offended?
My offence is loving thee;
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever,
Wha for thine would gladly die?
While the life beats in my bosom,
Thou shalt meet in *ilka* throe: every
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,
Ae sweet smile on me bestow.

Not the bee upon the blossom,
In the pride o' sunny noon;
Not the little sporting fairy,
All beneath the simmer moon;
Not the Minstrel, in the moment
Fancy lightens in his e'e,
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture,
That thy presence gies to me.

[This elegant lyric seems to have been composed in fulfilment of a promise made by the author to Mr. James Johnson, the engraver and publisher of the *Musical Museum*. In a letter to him dated 15th November 1788, after expressing himself in a highly complimentary strain regarding that publication, he thus concludes:—"Have you never a fair goddess that leads you a wild-goose chase of amorous devotion? Let me know a few of her quali-

ties, such as whether she be rather black or fair, plump or thin, short or tall, &c.; and choose your air, and I shall task my Muse to celebrate her."

We are not certain that Johnson was a married man, at this date. His wife, whose name was Charlotte Grant, survived her husband twenty years; but in the meantime he selected the name "Rabina" for the honor of being thus celebrated by Burns. Accordingly we find in the Hastie Collection of the poet's manuscripts in the British Museum, two versions of the song in the text, one of which is addressed to "Thou fair Rabina," and another to *Eliza*, as being deemed more euphonious for vocalization. Below the first of these, Burns has thus written:—"So much for your Rabina! How do you like the verses? I assure you I have tasked my Muse to the top of her performing." *

The lyric is a very successful one; and Burns rarely if ever surpassed the closing eight lines, which (like those of the last stanza of his "Rigs o' Barley") roll on with accumulating force till a climax of rapture is attained.]

MY BONIE BELL.

(Johnson's Museum, 1792.)

"In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with Heaven and Earth."

John Milton.—*Letter on Education.*

The smiling Spring comes in rejoicing,
And surly Winter grimly flies;
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,
And bonie blue are the sunny skies.

---

* Cunningham's, Blackie's, Chambers's and Waddell's editions concur in stating that the Fair Rabina had a real existence and was the sweetheart of a friend of the poet. "Mr. Stenhouse," says Chambers, "relates that the verses were designed to embody the passion of a Mr. Hunter towards a Rabina of real life, who, it would appear, was loved in vain, for the lover went to the West Indies, and there died soon after his arrival." Waddell suggests that the lover was Mr. Hunter of Barjary, Dumfriesshire. "The name was altered," says Blackie's editor, "by Johnson, in the Musical Museum to Eliza, as being more euphonious."—J. H.

Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the morning,
The ev'ning gilds the ocean's swell;
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,
And I rejoice in my Bonie Bell.

The flowery Spring leads sunny Summer,
The yellow Autumn presses near;
Then in his turn comes gloomy Winter,
Till smiling Spring again appear:
Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,
Old Time and Nature their changes tell;
But never ranging, still unchanging,
I adore my Bonie Bell.

[No one has ever ventured to suggest the identity of the fair one who inspired this exquisite song. In the *Museum*, it stands on the page opposite "Afton Water," and it may fairly be assumed that both were composed about the same period. In contrast with the almost passionless painting, which prevails in that still-life Pastoral where the poet's mysterious MARY lies embalmed for ever, this song in praise of Bonie Bell is remarkable for its living freshness and buoyant flow of poetic ardor.

The air to which the song is given in the *Museum* was supplied to Johnson by Burns.]

SWEET AFTON.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

"I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not, nor awake my love—my dove, my undefiled! The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

FLOW gently, sweet Afton! amang thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds, in yon thorny den,
Thou green crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,
I charge you, disturb not my slumbering Fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green vallies below,
Where, wild in the woodlands, the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild Ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, amang thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

[Burns would seem to have gathered quite a little troop of friends in the vale of Afton, near New Cumnock; and we throw out the conjecture that from some inspiration connected with that district may have sprung the pastoral song which now forms our text. A vast deal of conjectural nonsense has been written concerning the date and heroineship of this remarkable effusion. Lockhart, in 1828, thus wrote on the subject:—"The poems were published in July, 1786, and one of the first persons of superior condition (Gilbert indeed says *the* first) who courted his acquaintance in consequence of having read them, was Mrs. Stewart of Stair, a beautiful and accomplished lady. Burns presented her on this occasion with some MS. songs; and among the rest, with one in which her own charms were celebrated in that warm strain of compliment which our poet seems to have all along considered the most

proper to be used whenever a fair lady was to be addressed in rhyme :—

'Flow gently, sweet Afton, amang thy green braes.'"

There are two very misleading statements in this passage, one of which was pointed out by the Poet's widow to Mr. John M'Diarmid, thus :—"Mrs. Stewart, of Stair, a beautiful and accomplished lady! This passage is egregiously incorrect, she was the reverse of beautiful. See Mrs. Dunlop respecting this." The other misstatement is that "Afton Water" was one of the manuscript songs presented by Burns to that lady in 1786. We have carefully examined the Stair MSS. and can assure the reader that *Afton Water* is not among them. That interesting collection was many years ago sold by Mrs. Stewart's grandson to Mr. Dick, Bookseller, Ayr, and with the price obtained, the vendor bought a very fine finger-ring which he baptized "Bobby Burns." This gentleman—William Allason Cuninghame Logan, Esq., of Logan and Afton, was alive in 1879, and in his 73rd year. He possesses a still finer collection of manuscript pieces by Burns which were presented by the poet to Mrs. Stewart in 1791, and which the grandson says he shall never part with. That collection, usually called "The Afton MSS.," contains twelve of the author's choicest productions, composed between the latter half of the year 1788 and the close of 1791. The following is an accurate list of them, arranged according to date of composition :—

1. A Mother's Lament for the Loss of her Only Son [Sep. 1788].
2. Verses Written in the Hermitage at Friars' Carse [Dec. 1788].
3. On Seeing a Wounded Hare limp by me which a Fellow had just shot at [May 1789].
4. The Five Carlins—a Ballad. *Tune*—Chevy Chase. [Dec. 1789].
5. Election Ballad addressed to Rob. Graham, Esq. of Fintry, on the close of the contest between Sir J. Johnston and Capt. Miller for the Dumfries Boroughs [July 1790.].
6. Elegy and Epitaph on Capt. Matthew Henderson, who held the Patent of his Honors immediately from Almighty God [July 1790].
7. Tam O'Shanter—A Tale. [Nov. 1790].
8. A Fragment, which was meant for the beginning of an Elegy on the late Miss Burnet of Monboddo. [Jan. 1791].
9. The Lament of Mary Queen of Scots—a Ballad. [Feb. 1791.]
10. Craigieburn Wood—a Song. [April 1791].
11. Sweet Afton—a Song. [1791].
12. Poem on Sensibility—To a Friend. [Nov. 1791].

Dr. Currie, neither in his first nor second editions of the poet's works, made any remark concerning this song, but in his third edition he appended a foot-note to it, thus :—"Afton Water is the stream on which stands Afton Lodge to which Mrs. Stewart removed from Stair. Afton Lodge was Mrs. Stewart's property from her father. The song was presented to her in return for her notice,

the first he ever received from any person in her rank of life.—*E.*" Here then is the source of Lockhart's misstatements above referred to. That Burns did send her a copy of the song, the preceding list clearly shows; but the mere fact that her name was Catherine Gordon, indicates that she was not the "Mary" of the poet's lines. There is no *Afton Lodge* on the estate of Afton which Mrs. Stewart acquired through her father, and is now possessed by her grandson, already named. The wild scenery of the Vale of Afton is most accurately described in the text, which could never apply to the finely-trimmed walks and fragrant groves of Afton Lodge, near Tarbolton, to which Mrs. Stewart removed after leaving Stair, about the year 1790. Who then was the "Mary" of this song? That question was put by George Thomson to Gilbert Burns in 1819, and the reply elicited was as follows:—"The poet's Highland Mary; but Dr. Currie gives a different account of it. . . . G. B. thinks Dr. C. was misinformed in that particular; but he must not be contradicted."

Robert Chambers, in 1851, declined to adopt Gilbert Burns's theory as to the heroineship of this song; but in his second edition (1856) he boldly declared for it thus:—"A song of Burns, in person, scenery, and circumstance, most sweetly pastoral, and breathing of luxurious love, unsmirched by disappointment actual or anticipated, must here (May 1786) be introduced, because it undoubtedly relates to his passion for Mary Campbell. It may be remarked that the locality, Glen Afton, which is at a considerable distance, in the head of Nithsdale, has led to some misapprehensions regarding the history of the lyric; but all doubt is set at rest by a daughter of Mrs. Dunlop, who affirms that she remembers hearing Burns say it was written upon the Coilsfield dairymaid. We must consequently infer, that the name Afton was adopted *pro euphoniæ gratiâ*—suggested to him, probably, by the name of Afton Lodge, in the neighborhood of Coilsfield, the residence of his friend and patroness, Mrs. Stewart of Stair."

The beautiful melody to which this pastoral is now invariably sung was composed by the late Alexander Hume of Edinburgh, and is still copyright music.]

(A kind of holy calm pervades the soul of the reader who peruses, or the auditor who listens to the music of this unique strain. The "pastoral melancholy," which Wordsworth felt at St. Mary's Loch, steals over his heart, and laps him in a dreamy Elysium of sympathetic repose.

Gilbert Burns, Chambers and Douglas, have taken considerable pains to prove that this sweet song was inspired by Highland Mary, while Dr. Currie and Lockhart contend that it was written as a compliment to Burns's early patroness, Mrs. Stewart, of Stair, afterwards the proprietress of Afton Lodge. We would side with

Currie and Lockhart. In all Burns's tributes to Mary Campbell there is either the throb of passionate love or the wail of regret, neither of these features appear in Sweet Afton. We are therefore inclined to believe that this fine artistically finished song was a measured and polished compliment to Mrs. Stewart. As regards Mr. Douglas' objections that Mrs. Stewart's name was not Mary but Catharine—we see that Burns frequently borrowed a name—at all events, whoever the heroine was, we feel convinced that it was not Mary Campbell.—G. G.)

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,

ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE, WITH A WREATH OF BAYS.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1793.)

WHILE virgin[1] Spring by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Eolian strains between.

While Summer, with a matron grace,
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spikey blade.

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees,[2] with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed.

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows.

AFTON WATER—

"Flow gently, sweet Afton,
Amang thy green braes."

So long, sweet Poet of the year!
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that THOMSON is her son.

[Burns was now preparing to have done with Ellisland. On 25th August he sold his crops by auction while yet uncut in the fields. He admitted that these were well sold, at a guinea an acre (on an average) above their value. Mrs. Burns and the family were then in Ayrshire, where they had been for many weeks. About that time he received a letter from the Earl of Buchan, inviting him to be present at Ednam, near Kelso, on 22nd September, to witness, or take part in, the ceremony of inaugurating some monumental erection he had reared there, to be unveiled on Thomson's birthday. His lordship also suggested that Burns might compose an Ode for the occasion. "Go (said he) across the country, and meet the Tweed at the nearest point from your farm; and wandering along the pastoral bank of Thomson's pure parent stream, catch inspiration on the devious walk, till you find Lord Buchan sitting on the ruins of Dryburgh. There the commendator will give you a hearty welcome, and try to light the poetic lamp at the pure flame of native genius, upon the altar of Caledonian virtue."

Burns replied in courteous fashion; but said that "a week or two's absence, in the very middle of harvest, is what I much doubt I dare not venture on. Your lordship hints at an Ode for the occasion; but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired. I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your lordship with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am for the task."

The variations in this composition are very considerable. In the first MS. the address began in the following manner:—

[1] While cold-eyed Spring, a virgin coy,
Unfolds her verdant mantle sweet,
Or pranks the sod in frolic joy,
A carpet for her youthful feet:

While Summer, with a matron's grace,
Walks stately in the cooling shade,
And oft, delighted, loves to trace
The progress of the spikey blade:

While Autumn,[2] benefactor kind,
With age's hoary honors clad,
Surveys, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed, &c.

[2] While Autumn, by Tweed's fruitful side,
With sober pace and hoary head
Surveys, in self-approving pride, &c.

The Earl of Buchan, on this occasion, displayed a copy of the First Edition of Thomson's SEASONS,—"a copy which my father received from the Author." This book his lordship "crowned with a wreath of bays." All his life through he was fond of delivering magniloquent Eulogies, and projecting puerile fêtes of this nature. One of his latest was on 15th October 1814, when he crowned the bust of Burns at the foot of a colossal statue of Wallace which he had erected on an elevated grove near Dryburgh. His lordship composed and delivered the following patriotic compliment to the Bard of Scotland.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF BURNS.

Poet of Coila, here at Wallace' feet,
Thy generous Muse, thy manly soul I greet,
Thy soul, now severed from a servile crew,
And blest, united to the chosen few!
Too late I found thee, to redeem thy days
From bloated joys, and ill-directed lays;
But now I come, even with my setting sun,
To see to thee some tardy justice done.
Upon thy Bust, as once on Thomson's, I
Impose this chaplet, with a genial sigh;
And may our brave, unconquer'd country's fire
Still glow in song, and sparkle from her Lyre!]

NITHSDALE'S WELCOME HAME.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

THE noble Maxwells and their powers
Are coming o'er the border,
And they'll gae *big* Terregles' towers,* build
And set them a' in order.
And they declare Terregles fair,
For their abode they choose it;
There's no a heart in a' the land
But's lighter at the news o't.

* Terregles House is the stately mansion of the head of the Maxwells (now Lord Nithsdale) within three miles of Dumfries. The title was attainted in 1715, in consequence of the then Earl's participation in the rebellion of that year, and was restored only some twenty years ago. The romantic escape of the Earl, on the eve of his execution, through the devotion of his wife—he passing out of the tower of London dressed in her clothes, while she remained behind—is known to all readers of English History.—J. H.

Tho' stars in skies may disappear,
And angry tempests gather;
The happy hour may soon be near
That brings us pleasant weather:
The weary night o' care and grief
May *hae* a joyfu' morrow; have
So dawning day has brought relief, since
Fareweel our night o' sorrow.

[In our note to the "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots," page 20 *supra*, we introduce some particulars regarding Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable. The present song gives us an occasion to resume the subject. She was married to William Haggerston Constable, of Everingham, Yorkshire, and was the granddaughter and sole representative of that Earl of Nithsdale, who in 1715 escaped from the axe through the intrepidity and ingenuity of his wife, as referred to in footnote. Burns wrote to her at the close of 1789, enclosing his verses to William Tytler of Woodhouselee "for her ladyship's eye alone," and was some time thereafter formally introduced to her. She had returned to Scotland after a long absence, and was rebuilding Terregles House, the hereditary seat of her ancestry. The song in the text was thereupon composed and presented to her as an affectionate tribute of respect for an ancient family in whose fortunes the poet felt a natural interest. We have little doubt that several other Jacobite songs, which first appeared in Johnson's fourth volume, and which now fall to be presented to the reader, were prompted by his desire to gratify that lady. Mrs. Burns, in her M'Diarmid memoranda, remembers Lady W. Maxwell calling to see the poet after his removal to Dumfries; and while at Ellisland he dined once or twice at Terregles House where the family lived in great style. Burns used to talk with wonder of the number of wax candles he had seen lighted at supper.

The reader may here be reminded of a letter by Sir Walter Scott, to his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, dated 14th July 1828, enclosing the originals of several letters by Burns, which might be useful in constructing the memoir of the poet he was then engaged with. Sir Walter thus refers to one of these "addressed to that singular old curmudgeon, Lady Winifred Constable, in which you will see he plays high Jacobite; and on that account it is curious; though I imagine that his Jacobitism, like my own, belonged to the fancy, rather than the reason."]

FRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

FRAE the friends and land I love, from
Driv'n by Fortune's *felly* spite; cruel
Frae my best belov'd I rove,
Never mair to taste delight:
Never mair *maun* hope to find must
Ease frae toil, relief frae care;
When Remembrance wracks the mind,
Pleasures but unveil despair.

Brightest climes shall *mirk* appear, dark
Desert *ilka* blooming shore, every
Till the Fates, nae mair severe,
Friendship, love, and peace restore.
Till Revenge, wi' laurel'd head,
Bring our banished hame again;
And *ilk* loyal, bonie lad each
Cross the seas, and win his *ain*. own

[The poet in his Glenriddell notes claims only the last four lines of this song, which he says he added "by way of giving a turn to the theme of the poem, such as it is."

Stenhouse, however, records his belief that the whole piece is by Burns. The tune to which it is set is from Oswald's "Pocket Companion," where it is called "Carron Side." The reader will observe the unusual force of the language in this little piece,—"Fortune's felly spite"—"When Remembrance wracks the mind." There is a kind of Shakesperian pith here that surprises us. Who but a genius could have conceived the image of "Revenge, wi' laurel'd head"?]

SUCH A PARCEL OF ROGUES IN A NATION.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

FAREWEEL to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory;
Fareweel ev'n to the Scottish name,
Sae fam'd in martial story.
Now Sark* rins over Solway sands,
An' Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

What force or guile could not subdue,
Thro' many warlike ages,
Is wrought now by a coward few,
For hireling traitor's wages.
The English steed we could disdain,
Secure in valor's station;
But English gold has been our bane—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

O would, ere I had seen the day
That Treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

[In the musical collections of M'Gibbon and Oswald is found a tune having this title, which furnished the key-note to the above spirited effusion. The chief reference in it seems to be to the treaty of Union between England and Scotland, which was signed

* One of the tributaries of the Solway, and, for a short distance, the boundary line between England and Scotland.—J. H.

on 22nd July 1707. An old-fashioned prejudice against this measure was long in dying away, among the Jacobites in particular; and this seems to have been one of several pieces which were constructed by Burns for the delectation of his friends whose tastes lay in that direction.]

YE JACOBITES BY NAME.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear,
Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear,
Ye Jacobites by name,
Your *fautes* I will proclaim, faults
Your doctrines I *maun* blame, you shall hear. must

What is Right, and what is Wrang, by the law, by the law?
What is Right, and what is Wrang, by the law?
What is Right, and what is Wrang?
A short sword, and a lang,
A weak arm and a *strang*, for to draw. strong

What makes heroic strife, famed afar, famed afar?
What makes heroic strife, famed afar?
What makes heroic strife?
To whet th' assassin's knife,
Or hunt a Parent's life, wi' bluidy war?

Then let your schemes alone, in the state, in the state,
Then let your schemes alone, in the state.
Then let your schemes alone,
Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone, to his fate.

[This powerful political satire, in which some of the bard's favorite sentiments are expressed under the coverture of Jacobitism, might have been produced for the gratification of his neighbor, Lady

Winifred Maxwell. The melody to which it is set was much in vogue about the close of last century, and when well sung, may express both pathos and heroic energy. Hector Macneil's song, "My Love's in Germanie" was set to the same air, and had a long run of popularity.]

I HAE BEEN AT CROOKIEDEN.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

I HAE been at Crookieden,*
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
Viewing Willie and his men,
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.
There our foes that burnt and slew,
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
There, at last, they gat their due,
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.

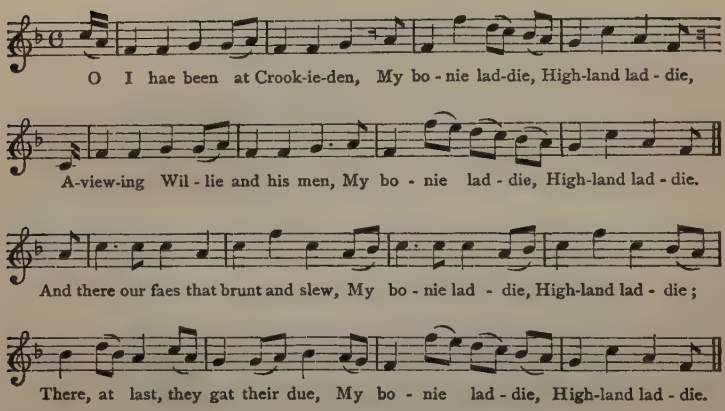
Satan sits in his black *neuk*, corner
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
Breaking sticks to roast the Duke,
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.
The bloody monster gae a yell,
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
And loud the laugh *gaed* round a' hell, went
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.

[This familiar ditty is mainly indebted to the hand of Burns for its point and pith. The original title of the tune is "Jinglin John," and after the cruelties of William, Duke of Cumberland, at Culloden, it became one of several quick step tunes known by the title "Bonie laddie, Highland laddie."]

* A cant name for hell.

(There is a variation to this song in which the first four lines of the second stanza run :—

" The Diel sat girnin' in the neuk,
Bonie Laddie, Highland Laddie,
Rivin' sticks to roast the Duke,
My bonie Highland Laddie."—J. H.)


O I hae been at Crook-ie-den, My bo - nie lad-die, High-land lad - die,
A-view-ing Wil - lie and his men, My bo - nie lad - die, High-land lad - die.
And there our faes that brunt and slew, My bo - nie lad - die, High-land lad - die ;
There, at last, they gat their due, My bo - nie lad - die, High-land lad - die.

O KENMURE'S ON AND AWA, WILLIE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O KENMURE'S on and awa, Willie,
O Kenmure's on and awa ;
An' Kenmure's lord 's the bravest lord
That ever Galloway saw.
Success to Kenmure's band, Willie !
Success to Kenmure's band !
There's no a heart that fears a Whig,
That rides by Kenmure's hand.

Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie !
Here's Kenmure's health in wine !
There's ne'er a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
Nor yet o' Gordon's* line.

* The Viscount Kenmure is head of the Southern branch of the Gordons, as the Duke of Gordon was in the north—J. H.

O Kenmure's lads are men, Willie,
O Kenmure's lads are men;
Their hearts and swords are metal true,
And that their foes shall *ken*. know

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie,
They'll live or die wi' fame;
But *sune*, wi' sounding victorie, soon
May Kenmure's lord come hame!
Here's him that's far awa, Willie!
Here's him that's far awa!
And here's the flower that I *loe* best, love
The rose that's like the snaw.*

[The hand of Burns is very visible here; but it is impossible to say what portions of the song are old and what by him. The tune is one of a peculiar class, of which there are several having a marked family likeness, and all popular. Of these "The Campbells are Comin," and "Bide by the Bonnets o' blue," may be mentioned.

The Right Hon. William George, Viscount Kenmure, was Commander-in-chief of the Chevalier's forces in the south-west of Scotland, in 1715. At the head of two hundred horsemen, he formed a junction with the troops under General Forster, and they marched into Preston in Lancashire. Here he was compelled to surrender a prisoner at discretion, on 13th Nov. 1745, and early on the following month, he and many of his unfortunate followers were conducted to London, where they were subjected to great indignities. Lord Kenmure was afterwards tried, and beheaded on Tower-hill, 24th Feb. 1716.]

(The forfeited estates were bought back by the widow, and from her descended to their son. Burns, during his Galloway tour in company with Mr. Syme, was entertained at Kenmure Castle, the romantic family seat, on the banks of the river Ken, by the grandson of the attainted peer, to whom the title was restored in 1824. Mr. Syme, in a letter to Dr. Currie says, that the poet thought so highly of this baronial seat, that he contemplated a poetical description of it.—J. H.)

---

* A white rose was the Jacobite badge. Compare the fine song commencing:—

"There grows a bonie brier-bush
In our kail-yard,
And bonie were the blossoms o't
In our kail-yard."—J. H.

EPISTLE TO JOHN MAXWELL, ESQ. OF TERRAUGHTY,

ON HIS BIRTH-DAY.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

HEALTH to the Maxwell's veteran Chief!
Health, ay unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspired, I turn'd Fate's sibyl leaf,
This natal morn,
I see thy life is stuff o' *prief*, proof
Scarce quite half-worn.

This day thou metes threescore eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven,
(The second-sight, ye ken, is given
To *ilka* Poet) every
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
Will yet bestow it.

If envious *buckies* view wi' sorrow ill-wishers
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May Desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In *brunstane stoure*. brimstone dust

But for thy friends, and they are *mony*, many
Baith honest men, and lasses bonie,
May *couthie* Fortune, kind and *cannie*, gentle careful
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blythe, and e'enings funny,
Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, *auld birkie!* Lord be near ye, old good fellow
And then the deil, he *daurna steer* ye: dare not disturb
Your friends ay love, your *faes* ay fear ye; foes
For me, shame *fa'* me, befall
If *neist* my heart I *dinna* wear ye, next do not
While BURNS they *ca'* me. call

[John Maxwell, of Terraughty and Munches, near Dumfries, was seventy-one years old when Burns thus addressed him, and although his earthly pilgrimage was not extended by forty-nine years more, according to the poet's wish, he eventually reached the age of ninety-four, dying on Burns's birthday, 1814. Chambers informs us that he was descended, at a comparatively small number of removes, from the gallant and faithful Lord Herries, who on bended knees entreated Queen Mary to prosecute Bothwell, as the murderer of Darnley, and who subsequently fought for her at Langside.

The original MS. of this Epistle is now in the Poet's Monument at Edinburgh.]

SECOND EPISTLE TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ. OF FINTRY.

5TH OCTOBER, 1791.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1793.)

LATE crippl'd of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a pass for leave to beg;
Dull, listless, teas'd, dejected, and deprest
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest);
Will generous Graham list to his Poet's wail?
(It soothes poor Misery, hearkening to her tale)
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature! partial Nature, I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain:
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground;

Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell;
The envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell;
Thy minions kings defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power;
Foxes and statesmen subtile wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog in their robes, are snug;
Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes—her dreaded spear and darts.

But Oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard!
A thing unteachable in world's skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still:
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun;
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not, Amalthea's horn:
No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich Dulness' comfortable fur;
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th' unbroken blast from ev'ry side:
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart:

Critics—appall'd, I venture on the name;
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame:
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes;
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose:

His heart by causeless wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear;
Foil'd, bleeding, tortur'd in th' unequal strife,
The hapless Poet flounders on thro' life:

Till, fled each hope that once his bosom fir'd,
And fled each muse that glorious once inspir'd,
Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead even resentment for his injur'd page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage!
So, by some hedge, the gen'rous steed deceas'd,
For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast;
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies, senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

O Dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest!
Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober selfish ease they sip it up;
Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
They only wonder "some folks" do not starve.
The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
When disappointment snaps the clue of hope,
And thro' disastrous night they darkling grope,
With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
And just conclude "that fools are fortune's care."
So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,
Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
In equanimity they never dwell,
By turns in soaring heav'n, or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
Already one strong hold of hope is lost—
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust

(Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears):
O! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!
Fintry, my other stay, long bless and spare!
Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown,
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

[At page 31, Vol. III., the reader has already seen the bulk of this *Second* Epistle to Mr. Graham, under the heading of "The Poet's Progress—a Poem in Embryo." In the present form it was despatched to that gentleman on 6th October 1791, which date is carefully attached to it in the Glenriddell volume at Liverpool, in which it is inscribed, in the poet's autograph.

The opening lines refer to the fact that about the end of March 1791, the poet had the misfortune to come down with his horse, and break his right arm. He soon recovered from that mishap, but about the close of the following September he experienced a similar accident, by which his leg was broken or sadly bruised. In sending the poem which forms the text, he thus wrote!—"Along with two other pieces, I enclose you a sheetful of groans, wrung from me in my elbow-chair, with one unlucky leg on a stool before me."

The reader will discover the variations made in this piece by comparing it with the first sketch referred to above.]

THE SONG OF DEATH.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

Scene.—A Field of Battle—Time of the day, evening—The wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following song.

FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth and ye skies,
Now gay with the broad setting sun;
Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties,
Our race of existence is run!

Thou grim King of Terrors; thou Life's gloomy foe!
Go, frighten the coward and slave;
Go, teach them to tremble, fell tyrant! but know
No terrors hast thou to the brave!

Thou strik'st the dull peasant—he sinks in the dark,
Nor saves e'en the wreck of a name;
Thou strik'st the young hero—a glorious mark;
He falls in the blaze of his fame!
In the field of proud honor—our swords in our hands,
Our king and our country to save;
While victory shines on Life's last ebbing sands,—
O who would not die with the brave?

[This appears to be the last composition produced by Burns before leaving Ellisland to take up his abode in the town of Dumfries. Currie has dated the letter to Mrs. Dunlop which enclosed it—"Ellisland, 17th December 1791," which must be a mistake, for the poet by that time, had removed with his family to the town, and he had in the meantime, at the close of November, paid a visit to Edinburgh, mainly to take, what was presumed to be, an everlasting farewell of Clarinda.

In sending this piece to Mrs. Dunlop he wrote thus:—"I have just finished the following song, which, to a lady the descendant of Wallace, and many heroes of his illustrious line, and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology." And, under the words, he added—"The circumstance that gave rise to it was—looking over, with a musical friend, M'Donald's Collection of Highland airs, I was struck with one, an Isle of Skye tune, entitled 'Oran an Aoig, or The Song of Death,' to the measure of which I have adapted my stanzas."

Chambers has expressed an honest doubt of the felicity of Burns's selection of this subject for a song. He thus argues:—"The ardor of an advancing host, as in Bruce's Address to his troops, is a theme which we all contemplate with interest, and which will never fail to furnish fitting work for the Muse. But the piteous condition of the wounded and the dying after the tide of battle has rolled past, is invested with associations of a different kind. It is difficult even in the instance of the most patriotic cause, to suppose these victims of the chances of War as joining in a sentimental effusion like that which Burns has supplied for them. Nevertheless I feel bound to state that (according to the report of

my late friend James Ballantine of Edinburgh) Thomas Campbell used to speak of this *Song of Death* as in his opinion, one of the most brilliant effusions of our poet."

It was Dr. Currie, the first Editor of Burns's works, and his earliest biographer, who struck the first public note of admiration of this production. It was about the close of 1791, before the enthusiasm generated by the progress of the French Revolution had waned into terror and disgust, that Burns "brought out the foregoing hymn, worthy of the Grecian Muse, when Greece was most conspicuous for genius and valor," (Biography, p. 212). Currie adds in a foot-note:—"This noble poem, to the editor, seems more calculated to invigorate the spirit of defence, in a season of real and pressing danger, than any production of modern times."

The Gaelic air, whose imposing title suggested Burns's Song of Death, may be good music to a Celtic ear; but we have tried in vain to see any expression in it. George Thomson, selected for these words the Irish air, "My Lodging is on the cold ground"—a beautiful melody certainly, but not in keeping with the sentiment and spirit of this song.]

POEM ON SENSIBILITY.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

SENSIBILITY, how charming,
Dearest Nancy, thou canst tell;
But distress, with horrors arming,
Thou alas! hast known too well!

Fairest flower, behold the lily
Blooming in the sunny ray;
Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
See it prostrate in the clay.

Hear the woodlark charm the forest,
Telling o'er his little joys;
But alas! a prey the surest
To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure
Finer feelings can bestow:
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

[For some years the correspondence between Burns and Mrs. M'Lehose had entirely ceased; for she still retained the unforgiving attitude which broken hopes and wounded pride forced her to assume on hearing of the poet's marriage to Jean Armour in April or May 1788. In the autumn of 1791, however, she made overtures towards reconciliation by sending him some verses she had lately composed. In his reply he says: "I have perused your most beautiful, but most pathetic poem—do not ask me how often, or with what emotions. You know that 'I dare to *sin*, but not to lie!' Your verses wring the confession from my inmost soul, that —I will say it, expose it if you please—I have more than once in my life been the victim of a damning conjuncture of circumstances; and that to me you must be ever

'Dear as the light that visits those sad eyes.'

I have just, since I had yours, composed the following stanzas; let me know your opinion of them.

'Sensibility, how charming, &c.'

The poet afterwards enclosed a copy of these exquisite lines to Mrs. Dunlop, thus varied in the opening couplet:—

Sensibility, how charming,
Thou, my friend, canst truly tell,

and addressed "To my honored friend, Mrs. Dunlop." A similar copy was sent to Mrs. Stewart of Afton.]

VERSICLES PRODUCED PRIOR TO A.D. 1792.

THE TOADEATER.

(LOCKHART'S LIFE OF BURNS, 1828.)

OF lordly acquaintance you boast,
And the Dukes that you dined with yestreen;
Why, an insect's an insect at most,
Though it crawl on the curl of a Queen!

[Allan Cunningham, in his Biography of our Poet, tells us that "at the table of Maxwell of Terraughty, when one of the guests chose to talk of the Dukes and Earls with whom he had drunk or dined, Burns silenced him with an epigram, thus:—

"What of Earls with whom you have supt?
And of Dukes that you dined with yestreen?
Lord! an insect's an insect at most,
Tho' it crawl on the curls of a Queen."

These epigrams are differently quoted by the various editors. Thus Chambers, in 1838, gave the following version of this trifle:—

"No more of your titled acquaintances boast,
And what nobles and gentles you've seen;
An insect is only an insect at most,
Tho' it crawl on the curl of a queen."]

DIVINE SERVICE IN THE KIRK OF LAMINGTON.

(LOCKHART, 1828.)

As *cauld* a wind as ever blew, cold
A caulder kirk, and in't but few:
A caulder Preacher never *spak*— spoke
Ye'se a' be *het or* I come back. hot ere

[Lamington is the adjoining parish to Covington, in Clydesdale, and the only instance on record of the poet having tarried for a day or two in that neighborhood will be found noted at page 56, Vol. II. He may, nevertheless, have taken opportunity to visit that locality without the world being apprised of it. One of the poet's most cherished acquaintances in Edinburgh was Mr. Robert Cleghorn, at Saughton Mills; and the following note from the Obituary of the Scots Magazine, 1809, seems to refer to a sister or daughter of that friend of Burns:—"Nov. 6th. At the manse of Covington, Euphemia Cleghorn, wife of the Rev. Bryce Little."]

THE *KEEKIN* GLASS.

Looking

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

How *daur* ye *ca'* me "*Howlet*-face?" dare call owl
Ye blear-e'ed,* wither'd spectre!
Ye only spied the keekin-glass,
An there ye saw your picture.

[The history of this curious epigram is thus given:—Burns one day visited his landlord Mr. Miller, at Dalswinton house; and Miss Miller, in answer to some complimentary remark from the poet about her blooming looks, told him that she had been much less commended on the previous evening. One of the lords of Justiciary from the circuit court at Dumfries happened to be dining with her father, and the gentlemen sat over their cups a considerable time after dinner. When they joined the ladies in the drawing room, his lordship's visual organs were so much affected that, pointing to Miss Miller, he asked her father,—"Wha's yon howlet-faced thing i' the corner?"

Burns immediately pulled out his pencil and wrote on a slip of paper the above lines, which he handed to Miss Miller, saying—"There is the answer you should send him."]

* Having eyes red, watery, as after drinking.—J. H.

A GRACE BEFORE DINNER, EXTEMPORE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

O THOU who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want!
We bless Thee, God of Nature wide,
For all Thy goodness lent:
And if it please Thee, heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent;
But, whether granted or denied,
Lord, bless us with content. Amen!

A GRACE AFTER DINNER, EXTEMPORE.

(STEWART, 1801.)

O THOU, in whom we live and move—
Who made the sea and shore;
Thy goodness constantly we prove,
And, grateful, would adore:
And, if it please Thee, Power above!
Still grant us, with such store,
The friend we trust, the fair we love—
And we desire no more. Amen!

[Both of these expressions of thankfulness and devotion are happily conceived. The first is entered in the author's hand, in the Glenriddell volume, now at Liverpool, where it immediately follows the "Lines to Sir John Whitefoord," given at page 32, *supra*, thus indicating that it is a production of the Ellisland period. The Grace after Dinner reads almost like a parody of its predecessor, the construction and style of both being identical.

Currie has given us interesting particulars of a visit paid to the poet at his farm in the summer of 1790, by Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, accompanied by Dr. Stuart of Luss. "I was much pleased (related Mr. Ramsay) with his *uxor Sabina qualis*, and the poet's modest mansion, so unlike the habitation of ordinary rustics. . . .

Such was the force and versatility of the bard's genius, that he made the tears run down Dr. Stuart's cheeks, albeit unused to the melting mood. . . . From that time we met no more, and I was grieved at the reports of him afterwards: poor Burns! we shall hardly ever see his like again! He was in truth, a sort of comet in literature, irregular in its motion, which did not do good proportioned to the blaze of light it displayed."—Fair and softly, Mr. Ramsay! we shall have to "wait a little longer"—say, a century or two—before philosophers can measure the "good" of such a spirit as that of Burns.

> "So triumphs the Bard! he hath pass'd from our sight,
> But his thoughts, like the power of the sun,
> Shall continue the light of their truth and their might,
> Till the aim of their mission be won."

In the summer of 1791 (that, namely, which we have just been passing through,) he was visited at Ellisland "by two English gentlemen;" Currie gives the account from the information of one of the party: "He received them with great cordiality, and asked them to share his humble dinner—an invitation which they accepted. After dinner, he produced his punch-bowl, made of Inverary marble, and mixing the spirit from the bottle which Mrs. Burns set on the board, with water and sugar, he filled their glasses, and invited them to drink. Burns was in his happiest mood, and the charms of his conversation were altogether fascinating. In the wildest of his strains of mirth he threw in touches of melancholy, and spread around him the electric emotions of his powerful mind. The Highland whisky improved in its flavor: the marble-bowl was again and again emptied and replenished: the guests forgot the flight of time and the dictates of prudence: at the hour of midnight they lost their way in returning to Dumfries, and could scarcely distinguish the town even when assisted by the morning's dawn."

Ellisland, with its scaur over the flowing Nith, from the brow of which the poet used to glower and spell, with a westlin look in the direction of Corsincone, must now be abandoned. To Dumfries "with darkening or illusive prospects, and dubious patronage, he must go! Multitudinous temptations, and uncertain footing" await him there: "sycophants, and spies, and tale-bearers to government, and to posterity," shall encompass his path; but his stay shall be brief—not so much as five years in duration. His genius with its elevating instincts shall bear him through the ordeal, and the music of his minstrelsy shall not cease to be heard—even when the Bard seems "to know existence only by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness, and to count time by the repercussions of pain."]

THE DUMFRIES PERIOD.

(Nov. 1791, to July 1796.)

"George the Third is Defender of something we call 'the Faith' in those years; George the Third is head charioteer of the Destinies of England, to guide them through the gulf of French Revolutions, American Independencies, &c.; and Robert Burns is Gauger of ale in Dumfries. It is an Iliad in a nutshell. We find a Poet, as brave a man as has been made for a hundred years or so, anywhere under the sun; and do we kindle bonfires, or thank the gods? Not at all. We, taking due counsel of it, set the man to gauge ale-barrels in the Burgh of Dumfries; and pique ourselves on our 'patronage of genius.'"—*Carlyle's "Past and Present,"* Book 2, Chap. ix.

THE DEAREST O' THE QUORUM.

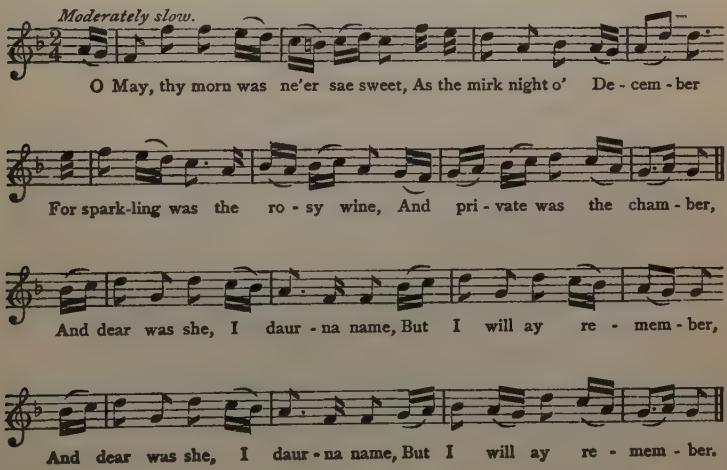
(Johnson's Museum, 1796.)

O May, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet
As the mirk night o' December!
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember.

And here's to them that, like oursel,
Can push about the jorum!
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's gude watch o'er 'em!
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum!
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum.

[On 23rd November Burns wrote to Clarinda from Dumfries, informing her that he would be in Edinburgh on the first Tuesday thereafter. That lady (as Chambers explains) "was now approaching a critical passage of her own history. She had resolved, though with much hesitation, to accept an invitation from her heartless husband, and join him in Jamaica. A parting interview took place between her and Burns in Edinburgh specially on the 6th of December. That it gave an occasion to an effusion of passionate feeling, is strongly hinted at in a letter of the poet written a twelvemonth after. We may also hesitate little in reading as a record of the scene a series of lyrics, one of which is amongst the most earnest and arresting expressions of intense feeling ever composed in verse." This remark refers to the three songs we next proceed to lay before the reader. That which now forms the text appears to be a dash-off, but warmly colored, reminiscence of the same private interview, disrobed of the passionately sentimental aspect which pervades the lyrics he communicated to the lady herself.

The melody to which this song is set in the *Museum* seems to be a version of the tune known as "The wee, wee German Lairdie." The air accords with the spirit of the song in the text.]


Moderately slow.
O May, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet, As the mirk night o' De - cem - ber
For spark-ling was the ro - sy wine, And pri - vate was the cham - ber,
And dear was she, I daur - na name, But I will ay re - mem - ber,
And dear was she, I daur - na name, But I will ay re - mem - ber.

PARTING SONG TO CLARINDA.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever; one
Ae farewell, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerful twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy:
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

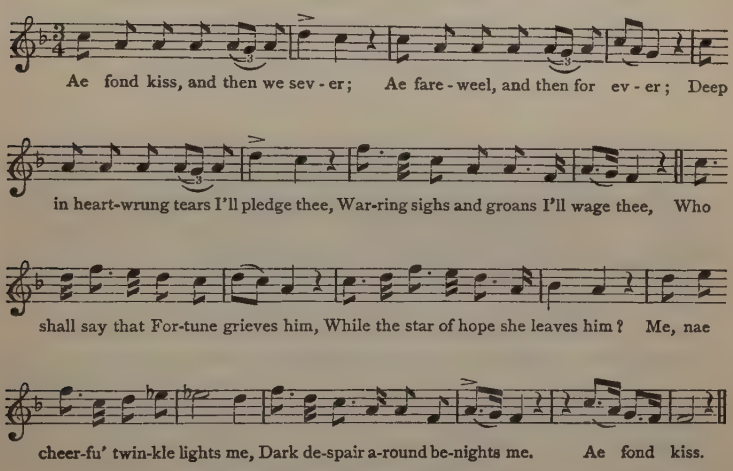
Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be *ilka* joy and treasure, every
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

[This impassioned lyric was posted to Mrs. M'Lehose in a letter from Dumfries on 27th December 1791, and contained also the two songs which immediately follow, on the same subject. The latter half of stanza second was used by Byron as a motto for his "Bride of Abydos." Sir Walter Scott remarked that these four lines "contain the essence of a thousand love tales;" and

Mrs. Jameson eloquently added that the lines are "in themselves a complete romance—the alpha and omega of feeling, and contain the essence of an existence of pain and pleasure distilled into one burning drop."

The following melody, harmonized into a duet by the late Alexander Hume, seems adapted to give adequate expression to the "Parting Song."

The original MS. is in the collection of W. F. Watson, Esq.


Ae fond kiss, and then we sev - er; Ae fare - weel, and then for ev - er; Deep
in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee, War-ring sighs and groans I'll wage thee, Who
shall say that For-tune grieves him, While the star of hope she leaves him? Me, nae
cheer-fu' twin-kle lights me, Dark de-spair a-round be-nights me. Ae fond kiss.

BEHOLD THE HOUR, THE BOAT, ARRIVE.

(CLARINDA CORRESPONDENCE, 1843.)

BEHOLD the hour, the boat, arrive!
My dearest Nancy, O farewell!
Severed frae thee, can I survive,
Frae thee whom I hae lov'd sae weel?

Endless and deep shall be my grief;
Nae ray of comfort shall I see,
But this most precious, dear belief,
That thou wilt still remember me!

Alang the solitary shore
Where flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wishful eye.

'Happy thou Indian grove,' I'll say,
'Where now my Nancy's path shall be!
While thro' your sweets she holds her way,
O tell me, does she muse on me?'

[These verses, sent on 27th December 1791 to Clarinda, although not very original, seem to have pleased Burns so much that in September 1793, he subjected them to some farther polishing to appear in George Thomson's collection set to a Gaelic air, called "Oran Gaoil." The song indeed can scarcely be regarded as an original production of our poet; for he did little else than transcribe it from an old Edinburgh Magazine which lay on his father's bookshelf at Mount Oliphant, and which is included by Gilbert Burns among the books his brother had access to in his youth. To satisfy the reader of this we append four stanzas culled from a long poem of sixteen verses contained in that Magazine.

FAREWELL, SONG TO NICÈ.

Behold the fatal hour arrive!
Nicè, my Nicè, ah, farewell!
Severed from thee, can I survive,
From thee whom I have lov'd so well?

Endless and deep shall be my woes,
No ray of comfort shall I see;
And yet, who knows, alas! who knows
If thou wilt e'er remember me?

Along the solitary shore,
I'll wander pensive and alone;
And wild re-echoing rocks implore
To tell me where my nymph is gone.

Of Nicè, wheresoe'er she goes,
The fond attendant I shall be;
And yet, who knows, alas! who knows
If she will e'er remember me.]

THOU GLOOMY DECEMBER.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

ANCE mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Ance mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair!

Fond lovers' parting is sweet, painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, O farewell for ever!
Anguish unmingled, and agony pure!

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown,
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Till my last hope and last comfort is gone.

Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair.

[Only the two opening stanzas of this song were forwarded to Clarinda in the poet's letter to her of 27th December, which closes with these verses, followed by the words—"The rest of this song is on the wheels." The remainder was added some time after, and forwarded to Johnson and set to a plaintive Scots air which he furnished. Stenhouse informs us that the poet's first intention was to have it set to the tune "Wandering Willie," which would have been more suitable; but as that had been given in a previous volume, another air was selected.]

MY NATIVE LAND SAE FAR AWA.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

O SAD and heavy, should I part,
But for her sake, sae far awa;
Unknowing what my way may thwart,
My native land sae far awa.

Thou that of a' things Maker art,
That formed this Fair sae far awa,
Gie body strength, then I'll ne'er start,
At this my way sae far awa.*

How true is love to pure desert!
Like mine for her sae far awa';
And *nocht* shall heal my bosom's smart, nothing
While, oh, she is sae far awa!

Nane other love, *nane* other dart, no
I feel but her's sae far awa;
But fairer never touched a heart
Than her's, the Fair, sae far awa.

[This song would almost pass for one of the series composed at this period in reference to the author's parting with Clarinda. Others have been pressed into the same service by some of the poet's editors, such as "My Nannie's Awa," "Wandering Willie," &c.; but the dates of these are considerably later, as may be ascertained from the Thomson correspondence. The air to which this in the text is set in the Museum, is called "Dalkeith Maiden Bridge," from Aird's collection.] (See our note on "Wandering Willie."—J. H.)

* Grant bodily strength, then I shall not be startled at the length of way I have to go to see her, however far away she may be.—J. H.

LINES ON FERGUSSON, THE POET.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

ILL-FATED genius! Heaven-taught Fergusson,
What heart that feels and will not yield a tear,
To think Life's sun did set e'er well begun
To shed its influence on thy bright career.

O why should truest Worth and Genius pine
Beneath the iron grasp of Want and Woe,
While titled knaves and idiot-Greatness shine
In all the splendor Fortune can bestow?

[Chambers assigns this little effusion to the early portion of 1792, and informs us that the poet had inscribed the lines on a blank leaf of a publication, called *The World*, which we find he ordered from Peter Hill on 2nd February 1790.]

I DO CONFESS THOU ART SAE FAIR.

ALTERATION OF AN OLD POEM.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

I DO confess thou art sae fair,
I wad been o'er the *lugs* in love, ears
Had I na found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak thy heart could move:
I do confess thee sweet, but find
Thou art so thriftless o' thy sweets,
Thy favors are the silly wind
That kisses *ilka* thing it meets. every

See yonder rosebud, rich in dew,
Amang its native briers sae coy;
How sune it *tines* its scent and hue, loses
When *pu'd* and worn a common toy; pulled

Sic fate ere lang shall thee betide,
Tho' thou may gaily bloom awhile;
And sune thou shalt be thrown aside,
Like ony common weed and vile.

[In his Glenriddell Notes the Poet says:—"This song is altered from a poem by Sir Robert Aytoun, private secretary to Mary and Anne, Queens of Scotland. I do think that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments by giving them a Scots dress." Many readers, however, will prefer the old fashioned quaintness of expression in the original, although it wants the compression and Doric sweetness of Burns's adaptation. The following specimen of the older version will explain this:—

I do confess thee sweet, yet find
Thee such an unthrift of thy sweets,
Thy favors are but like the wind
That kisses every thing it meets;
And since thou canst with more than one
Thou'rt worthy to be kiss'd by none.

The morning rose, untouch'd that stands,
Arm'd with her briars, and sweetly smells,
Once pluck'd and strain'd thro' ruder hands,
No more that sweetness with her dwells;
Her leaves fall from her one by one,
And scent and beauty both are gone."]

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

Chorus—The weary *pund*, the weary pund, pound
The weary pund o' *tow*; flax-fibre
I think my wife will end her life,
Before she spin her tow.

I bought my wife a *stane* o' *lint*, stone flax-stalks
As gude as e'er did grow,
And a' that she has made o' that
Is ae *puir* pund o' tow,* poor
The weary pund, &c.

* "Tow" is the fibre derived from "lint" or the stalks of the flax-plant, by first steeping them in water and then beating them with a mallet. All that this

There sat a bottle in a *bole*, recess
Ayont the ingle *low*;* Beyond blaze
And ay she took the *tither souk*, other suck
To *drouk* the *stourie* tow, moisten dusty
The weary pund, &c.

Quoth I, for shame, ye dirty dame,
Gae spin your tap o' tow!†
She took the *rock*, and wi' a knock, distaff
She brake it o'er my *pow*, head
The weary pund, &c.

At last her feet—I sang to see't!
Gaed foremost o'er the *knowe*,‡ went knoll
And *or I wad* anither jad, before I'd risk
I'll wallop in a *tow*, rope
The weary pund, &c.

[This was a favorite subject among the old song writers. In a later edition of Herd's Collection (1791) we find the following:—

"If my wife and thy wife
Were in a boat thegither,
And yon honest man's wife
Were there to steer the ruther;
And if the boat was bottomless,
And seven miles to row;
We ne'er would wish them back again,
To spin their taps o' tow."

Burns is undoubtedly the author of the version of the song which forms the text. The title and music are taken from Oswald's Caledonian Pocket Companion, Book 8. The tune has been much admired and was selected to suit Mr. Graham of Gartmore's chivalrous words, published by Sir Walter Scott in the Border Minstrelsy. The first verse will indicate the song.

"If doughty deeds my ladye please,
Right soon I'll mount my steed;
And strong his arm and fast his seat,
That bears from me the meed.

---

wife seemed to have got from a whole stone of "lint" was a single pound of "tow." In reality she had sold or exchanged the rest for whisky. A statutory stone is now 14 lbs., but, in Scotland formerly, it varied for almost every material. In none was it under 16 lbs., in many it was 17½ lbs.—J. H.

* Concealed in a hole behind where the fire burned on the hearth.—J. H.

† *Tap o' tow*, the quantity of flax on the distaff to be spun.—J. H.

‡ She went out in her coffin "feet-foremost," as the Scotch say.—J. H.

I'll wear thy colors in my cap,
Thy picture in my heart;
And he that bends not to thine eye
Shall rue it to his smart.

Chorus.—Then tell me how to woo thee, love,
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake, nae care I'll take,
Tho' ne'er another trow me."]

WHEN SHE CAM' BEN SHE BOBBET.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O WHEN she cam' ben she *bobbet* fu' low, curtseyed
O when she cam' *ben* she bobbet fu' low, in
And when she cam' ben, she kiss'd Cockpen,*
And *syne* she deny'd she did it *ava*. then at all

And was na Cockpen right saucy witha'?
And was na Cockpen right saucy witha'?
In leaving the daughter o' a lord,
And kissin' a collier lassie an' a'!

O never look down, my lassie, at a',
O never look down, my lassie, at a',
Thy lips are as sweet, and thy figure complete,
As the finest dame in castle or ha'.

Tho' thou hast nae silk, and holland sae sma',
Tho' thou hast nae silk, and holland sae sma',
Thy coat and thy *sark* are thy ain handywark, chemise
And lady Jean was never sae braw.

[This is certainly more of a dressed-up old ballad than an original song. Such as it is, however, it was destined to give the hint to Lady Nairne, out of which issued her famous ballad

"The Laird o' Cockpen, he's proud and he's great."]

* We have several times indicated that in Scotland a proprietor is addressed by the name of his estate.—J. H.

SCROGGAM, MY DEARIE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1803.)

THERE was a wife *wonn'd* in Cockpen, dwelt
Scroggam;
She brew'd gude ale for gentlemen;*
Sing auld *Cowl*, lay ye down by me, cowled priest
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

The gudewife's *dochter* fell in a fever, daughter
Scroggam;
The priest o' the parish he fell in anither;
Sing auld Cowl, lay ye down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

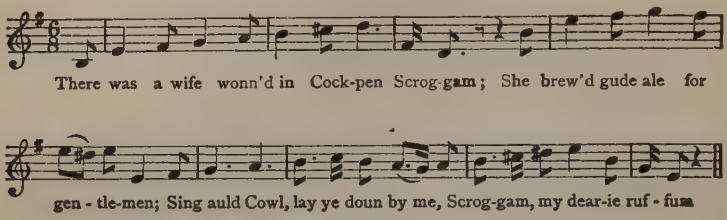
They laid them side by side thegither,
Scroggam;
That the heat o' the *taen* might cool the one
tither; other
Sing auld Cowl, lay ye down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

[This singular song has Burns's name attached to it in the *Museum*. We place it here in consequence of its connection with the preceding song, so far as locality is concerned. Cockpen is a neat village a few miles south from Edinburgh. The incident referred to in the ballad, the text shows to have occurred above three hundred years ago, when the parish priest was a shaven monk. As the tune is short, and, like the words, very eccentric, we here annex it.]

(This is obviously an old song. It is just such a piece, at the expense of the priests, as the people even before the reformation

* Ale was the national beverage of Scotland down to about the beginning of last century, when it was largely superseded by whisky.—J. H.

delighted in. Every reader of Chaucer is familiar with productions conceived in the same spirit. It is exactly of the tone to charm Burns, who does not seem to have touched it.—J. H.)


There was a wife wonn'd in Cock-pen Scrog-gam; She brew'd gude ale for
gen - tle-men; Sing auld Cowl, lay ye doun by me, Scrog-gam, my dear-ie ruf - fum

MY COLLIER LADDIE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

WHARE live ye, my bonie lass?
And tell me what they *ca'* ye; call
My name, she says, is mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier laddie.
My name, she says, &c.

See you not yon hills and dales
The sun shines on sae *brawlie*; brightly
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier laddie.
They a' are mine, &c.

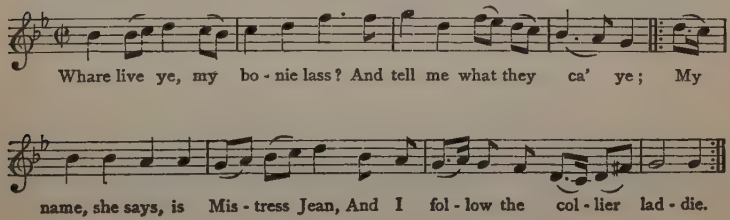
Ye shall *gang* in gay attire, walk
Weel *buskit* up sae gaudy; dressed
And ane to wait on every hand,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier laddie. if
And ane to wait, &c.

Tho' ye had a' the sun shines on,
And the earth conceals sae lowly,
I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier laddie.
I wad turn my back, &c.

I can *win* my five pennies in a day, earn
An' spend it at night fu' *brawlie*; jovially
And make my bed in the collier's *neuk*, nook
And lie down wi' my Collier laddie.
And make my bed, &c.

Love for love is the bargain for me,
Tho' the wee cot-house should *haud* me; hold
And the warld before me to win my bread,
And *fair fa'* my Collier laddie! blessings on
And the warld before me, &c.

[This is one of those songs never seen or heard in the world before the poet picked it up, both words and music, "from the singing of a country girl." In his Glenriddell Notes he says of it—"I do not know a blyther old song than this." We annex the music, which is as blythe as the words.]



SIC A WIFE AS WILLIE HAD.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

WILLIE WASTLE dwalt on Tweed,
The spot they ca'd it Linkumdoddie;*
Willie was a *wabster* gude, weaver
Could stoun a clue wi' ony body:†

* The site of Willie's house is shown, close to the Tweed, in the parish of Broughton, Peeblesshire, at a spot called Linkumdoddie. A streamlet named Logan Water falls into the Tweed close by the alleged site.—J. H.

† Could have stolen a clue of the yarn or thread that the good wives brought to be woven, as well as any one.—J. H.

He had a wife was *dour* and *din*, sullen sallow
O *Tinkler Maidgie* was her mither; tinker Madge
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

She has an *e'e*, she has but ane, eye
The cat has twa the very color;
Five rusty teeth *forbye* a stump, besides
A clapper tongue wad *deave* a Miller: deafen
A whiskin beard about her *mou*, mouth
Her nose and chin they threaten *ither;* each other
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

She's *bow-hough'd*, she's *hen-shin'd*,
Ae limpin leg a hand-breed shorter;*
She's twisted right, she's twisted left,
To balance fair in ilka quarter:
She has a hump upon her breast,
The twin o' that upon her shouther;
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

Auld *baudrans* by the *ingle* sits pussy-cat fireside
An' wi' her *loof* her face a washin; paw
But Willie's wife is nae sae *trig*, neat
She dights her *grunzie* wi' a hushion:† snout (*nose*)
Her walie nieves like midden-creels,‡
Her face wad *fyle* the Logan water; befoul
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

---

* Her hip-joint is bent outwards, her ankle is shot out like a hen's, and one leg is a hand-breadth shorter than the other.—J. H.

† She wipes her nose with a footless stocking; stockings with the feet cut off used to be worn by women in winter as a covering for the arms.—J. H.

‡ Powerful fists, like manure-baskets.—J. H.

[Cunningham tells us that the heroine of the above song was the wife of a farmer who lived near Ellisland. Mrs. Renwick, of New York (the "blue-eyed lassie" of Burns's song), refers to this matter thus:—"Cunningham says the name of Willie Wastle's wife is lost; I could tell him who she was, but there is no use in opening up old sores."

The air selected for these words in the *Museum* is called "The Eight Men of Moidart;" but it is usually sung to the sprightly air "Tibbie Fowler o' the Glen."]

LADY MARY ANN.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O LADY Mary Ann looks o'er the Castle *wa'* wall
She saw three bonie boys playing at the *ba'*, ball
The youngest he was the flower amang them a'.
My bonie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet.

O father, O father, and ye think it fit,
We'll send him a year to the college yet,
We'll sew a green ribbon round about his hat,
And that will let him *ken* he's to marry yet know

Lady Mary Ann was a flower in the dew,
Sweet was its smell and bonie was its hue,
And the longer it blossom'd the sweeter it grew,
For the lily in the bud will be bonier yet.

Young Charlie Cochran was the sprout of an *aik* oak
Bonie and bloomin' and *straught* was its make, straight
The sun took delight to shine for its sake,
And it will be the *brag* o' the forest yet. boast

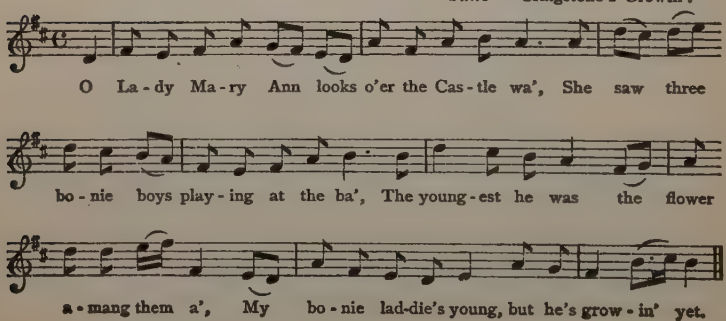
The simmer is gane when the leaves they were green,
And the days are awa' that we hae seen,
But far better days I trust will come again;
For my bonie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet.

[It is said by Motherwell and others that Burns, in the course of his Highland tour, noted down the original of this ballad with the melody, from a lady's recitation or singing. The original words have been given by C. K. Sharpe, Mr. Maidment, and others; but these are distinguished by trifling puerilities, while the ballad from the hand of Burns is of the finest spun texture. This pretty little melody was also supplied by our poet.

According to antiquarians, the ballad is founded on a real incident dating about 1634. The young Urquhart, of Craigston, who by the death of his parents had fallen into the guardianship of the laird of Innes, was married, while yet a youth, to his guardian's daughter, Elizabeth Innes, with the object of securing his estates. The closing verse of the original ballad is thus given :—

"In his twelfth year, he was a married man,
In his thirteenth year, there he gat a son,
In his fourteenth year, his grave was growing green,
And that was the end of his growin."]

Tune—"Craigstone's Growin'."


O La-dy Ma-ry Ann looks o'er the Cas-tle wa', She saw three
bo-nie boys play-ing at the ba', The young-est he was the flower
a-mang them a', My bo-nie lad-die's young, but he's grow-in' yet.

KELLY BURN BRAES.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

THERE *leevit* a *carl* in Kelly Burn Braes,* {lived / old fellow}
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme ;†

* The Kelly Burn is the northern boundary of Ayrshire, and divides the parish of Largs from Renfrewshire for upwards of two miles, and flows into the firth of Clyde at Kelly Bridge. Further east, the boundary is marked by "the Rowtin Burn," and the locality is called "The Back o' the Warld."

† Regret and repentance come after trial or experience. Rue and thyme are two plants much grown in Scottish cottage-gardens. Prisoners on trial in England often hold a bunch of rue when in the dock.—J. H.

And he had a wife was the plague o' his days,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Ae day as the carl *gaed* up the lang glen, went
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme:
He met wi' the Deil, wha said, "How do you *fen*?" get along
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

"I've got a bad wife, sir, that's a' my complaint,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
For, saving your presence, to her ye're a saint,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

"It's neither your *stot* nor your *staig* I shall crave, steer / young stallion
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

"O welcome most kindly!" the *blythe* carl said, happy
"Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
But if ye can match her ye're *waur* than ye're *ca'd*, worse / called
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

The Devil has got the auld wife on his back,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
And like a poor pedlar he's carried his pack,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

He's carried her hame to his ain *hallan* door, hall
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
Syne bade her *gae* in for a b—, and a w—, go
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
Turn out on her guard in the clap o' a hand,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The *carlin* gaed thro' them like ony *wud* bear, wife mad
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
Whae'er she gat hands on cam' ne'er her *nae mair*, no more
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

A *reekit* wee deevil looks over the wa', smoked
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
"O help, maister, help, or she'll ruin us a'!"
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The Devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme:
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife.
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The Devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
He was not in wedlock, thank Heav'n, but in hell,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then Satan has travell'd again wi' his pack,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
And to her auld husband he's carried her back,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

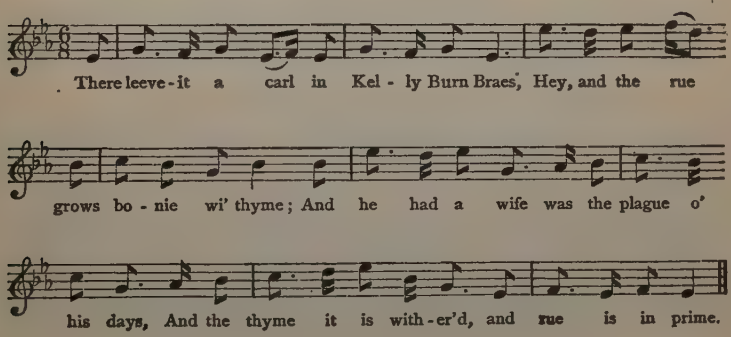
"I hae been a Deevil the *feck* o' my life, most
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
But ne'er was in hell till I met wi' a wife,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

[This ballad displays the genius of Burns, perhaps, as decidedly as his "Tam O' Shanter." There is a sort of original ballad which suggested it, an English production called "The Farmer's old Wife," which is given at length in No. 62 of the Percy Society's Publications, "Ancient Poems, Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England," edited by Robert Bell, p. 204. Burns admits that his ballad is "founded on the old traditionary verses," and a stanza or two will show the prosaic matter of which it was composed.

"There was an old farmer in Sussex did dwell,
And he had a bad wife as many knew well.
(Whistling chorus, here)
Then Satan came to the old man at the plough.
"One of your family I must have now," &c.

In Collier's Roxburghe Ballads, p. 35, is given one in the same tenor, called "The Devil and the Scold."

The melody attached to Burns's words in the *Museum* is very characteristic, and has been made to bear the burden of several popular songs, such as—"A' body's like to get married but me." We here annex it.]


There leeve-it a carl in Kel - ly Burn Braes, Hey, and the rue
grows bo - nie wi' thyme; And he had a wife was the plague o'
his days, And the thyme it is with-er'd, and rue is in prime.

THE SLAVE'S LAMENT.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

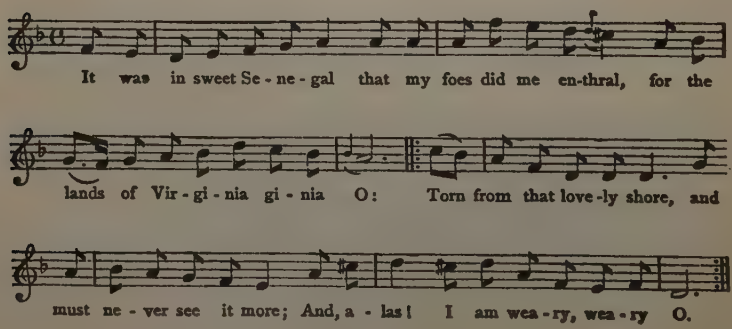
It was in sweet Senegal that my foes did me enthral,
For the lands of Virginia, ginia O:
Torn from that lovely shore, and must never see it more;
And alas! I am weary, weary O:

Torn from that lovely shore, and must never see it more;
And alas! I am weary, weary O.

All on that charming coast is no bitter snow and frost,
Like the lands of Virginia, ginia O:
There streams for ever flow, and the flowers for ever blow,
And alas! I am weary, weary O:
There streams for ever flow, and flowers for ever blow,
And alas! I am weary, weary, O.

The burden I must bear, while the cruel scourge I fear,
In the lands of Virginia, ginia O;
And I think on friends most dear, with the bitter, bitter tear,
And alas! I am weary, weary O:
And I think on friends most dear, with the bitter, bitter tear,
And alas! I am weary, weary O.

[Both words and melody of this very tender production were communicated by Burns to Johnson; the air is supposed to be native African. Mr. C. K. Sharpe gives a stall-copy of a somewhat similar subject called "The Betrayed Maid," which he supposes may have suggested to Burns the lines of the text; but it is of the most prosaic character. We give the melody from the *Museum*.]


It was in sweet Se-ne-gal that my foes did me en-thral, for the
lands of Vir-gi-nia gi-nia O: Torn from that love-ly shore, and
must ne-ver see it more; And, a-las! I am wea-ry, wea-ry O.

O CAN YE LABOR LEA?*

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

Chorus—O can ye labor lea, young man,
O can ye labor lea?
It's fee nor bountith shall us twine†
Gin ye can labor lea. if

I fee'd a man at Michaelmas,
Wi' *airle* pennies three; earnest
But a' the *faut* I had to him, fault
He could na labor lea.
O can ye labor lea, &c.

O clappin's gude in Febarwar,
An' kissin's sweet in May;
But my delight's the ploughman lad,
That weel can labor lea,
O can ye labor lea, &c.

O kissin is the key o' love,
And *clappin* is the lock; patting
An' *makin o's* the best thing yet, fondling
That e'er a young thing gat.
O can ye labor lea, &c.

[The version we give of this song is from the Poet's MS. in the British Museum, which differs somewhat from that printed in Johnson.

The fine old melody attached to these words was called "The

---

* Lea is land that has lain for some time untilled, or that has not been previously tilled. Used thus figuratively, the word may have either sense, according as the querist is a widow or maid. Here, we see from the last stanza, she is a maid.—J. H.

† It is neither amount of wage nor gifts that shall twist.—J. H.

Miller's Daughter," or "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey," and is now familiar over the whole globe as the air of Burns's "Auld Lang Syne."

THE DEUK'S DANG O'ER MY DADDIE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

THE *bairns gat* out wi' an *unco* shout, (children; got; great)
The *deuk's dang o'er* my daddie, O! (duck; knocked over)
The *fien-may-care*, quo the feirrie auld wife, (deuce-may-care)
He was but a *paidlin* body, O! (pottering)
He paidles out, and he paidles in,
An' he paidles late and early, O:
This seven lang years I hae lien by his side,
An' he is but a *fusionless carlie*, O! (pithless old man)

O haud your tongue, my *feirrie* auld wife, (lively)
O haud your tongue, now Nancie, O:
I've seen the day, and sae *hae* ye, (have)
Ye wad na been sae *donsie*, O. (ill to please)
I've seen the day ye butter'd my brose,
And cuddl'd me late and early, O;
But *downa-do's* come o'er me now, (impotency is)
And och, I find it sairly, O!

[This picture of senile frailty has its key-note struck in the opening couplet by proclaiming the fact that a duck, in running between the feet of the little old man, has overturned him in the gutter. The tune is old, and was a favorite in England so early as 1657, when it was included in Playford's "Dancing Master," under the title of "The Buff Coat." The late Mr. C. K. Sharpe thus supplied the old words from an ancient MS. once in his possession:—

"The nine-pint *bicker's faun* off the *bink*, (beaker fallen; bench)
And broken the ten-pint cannie, O,
The wife and her *cummers* sat doun to drink (gossips)
But ne'er a drap gae the gudemannie, O:

The bairns they a' set up the cry,
The deuk's dang o'er my daddie, O;
"There's no mickle matter," quo the gudewife,
"He's ay been a daidlin' body, O."]

THE DEIL'S AWA WI' TH' EXCISEMAN.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

The deil cam fiddlin thro' the town,
And danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman,
And ilka wife cries "Auld Mahoun,*
I wish you luck o' the prize, man."

Chorus.—The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman,
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman.

We'll mak our *maut*, and we'll brew our drink, malt
We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man,
And mony braw thanks to the *meikle* black deil, big
That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman.
The deil's awa, &c.

There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man,
But the ae best dance ere cam to the land,
Was the deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman
The deil's awa, &c.

[Lockhart has furnished an anecdote, by way of explaining the origin of this song, which is romantic enough, if true. That interesting biographer derived his information from Mr. Joseph Train, Supervisor of Excise at Castle Douglas, in Galloway. Cromek's account is that at a meeting of his brother Excisemen in Dumfries, Burns being called upon for a song, handed these

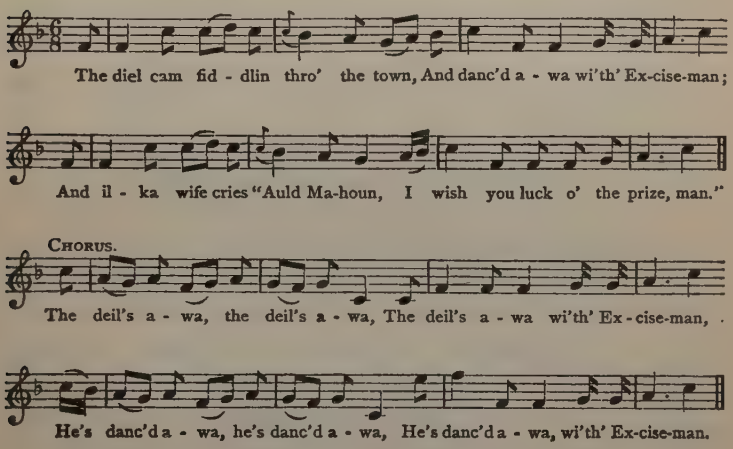
* A corruption for Mahomet, a word brought by the crusaders from Palestine. Here it means the Devil.—J. H.

verses extempore to the president, written on the back of a letter. That account (which was earliest given to the public) nearly tallies with the following passage in an undated letter of Burns, bearing Dumfries post-mark, and addressed to the General Supervisor of Excise at Edinburgh :—"Mr. Mitchell mentioned to you a ballad which I composed and sung at one of his Excise-court dinners, here it is—"The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman,"—Tune, *Madam Cossy*. If you honor my ballad by making it one of your charming *bon-vivant* effusions, it will secure it undoubted celebrity." Lockhart's account is thus :—"On the 27th February 1792, a suspicious-looking brig was discovered in the Solway Firth, and Burns was one of the party whom the superintendent conducted to watch her motions. She got into shallow-water, and the officers were enabled to discover that her crew were numerous, armed, and not likely to yield without a struggle." The account, which is rather prolix, goes on to state that Lewars was dispatched to Dumfries for a guard of dragoons, and Burns, getting impatient at Lewars' protracted absence, employed himself by striding among the reeds and shingle humming to himself some ditty, which afterwards turned out to be the very song in the text that he had then been in the act of composing. Lewars at length arrived with the soldiers, and "Burns putting himself at the head of the party, waded sword in hand, to the brig, and was the first to board her. The crew lost heart, and submitted, the vessel was condemned, and with all her arms and stores, sold by auction next day at Dumfries; upon which occasion, Burns thought fit to bid for and secure four carronades, by way of trophy. But he went a step farther: he sent the guns, with a letter, to the French Assembly, requesting that body to accept of them as a mark of his admiration and respect. The present and its accompaniment were intercepted at Dover, and this would appear to be the principal circumstance that drew on Burns the notice of his jealous superiors."

Mr. Train, who in 1825 succeeded Mr. John Lewars as Supervisor of Excise in Dumfries, stated, in a letter to Dr. Carruthers of Inverness, that when Lewars died in 1827 he succeeded in obtaining from his widow some manuscripts and letters relating to the above subject, which he forwarded to Sir Walter Scott. Among these were a memorandum by Lewars, and also a list of the arms and stores of the captured brig "Rosamond," drawn up by Burns himself, who superintended their sale by auction in Dumfries. Opposite each article was the name of the purchaser and price obtained, his own name being inserted as purchaser of the four guns for three pounds. Mr. Train also stated that Sir Walter tested the accuracy of Lewars' information about the destination of the guns by applying to the Custom House authori-

ties in London, who, after a search, found the fact recorded that the guns addressed to the French Assembly had been seized at Dover, as stated in the memorandum by Lewars.

There exists an early Northumbrian song on the same subject which may have suggested the idea of writing it to Burns. The melody to which the words are set in the *Museum* is so old as to be found in Playford's "Dancing Master" 1657, under the name of "The Hemp Dresser." We here present it.]


The diel cam fid - dlin thro' the town, And danc'd a - wa wi'th' Ex-cise-man;
And il - ka wife cries "Auld Ma-houn, I wish you luck o' the prize, man."
Chorus.
The deil's a - wa, the deil's a - wa, The deil's a - wa wi'th' Ex - cise-man,
He's danc'd a - wa, he's danc'd a - wa, He's danc'd a - wa, wi'th' Ex-cise-man.

THE COUNTRY LASS.

(Johnson's Museum, 1792.)

In simmer, when the hay was *mawn*, mown
And corn wav'd green in *ilka* field, every
While *claver* blooms white o'er the lea clover
And roses blaw in ilka *bield;* sheltered spot
Blythe Bessie in the milking *shiel*, shed
Says—I'll be wed, come o't what will:
Out spake a dame in wrinkled *eild*— age
O' gude advisement comes nae ill.

It's ye hae wooers *mony ane*, many a one
And lassie, ye're but young ye ken;

Then wait a wee, and *cannie wale* cautiously choose
A routhie butt, a routhie ben;*
There's Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his *byre*; cow-stable
Tak this frae me, my bonie hen,
It's plenty *beets* the lover's fire. fans

For Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
I *dinna* care a single flie; do not
He lo'es sae weel his *craps* and *kye*, crops cows
He has nae love to spare for me;
But blythe's the *blink* o' Robie's e'e, glance
And weel I *wat* he lo'es me dear: wot
Ae blink o' him I wad na gie
For Buskie-glen and a' his *gear*. wealth

O thoughtless lassie, life's a *faught*; fight
The *canniest gate*, the strife is sair easiest way
But ay *fu'-han't* is *fechtin* best, full-handed fighting
A hungry care's an *unco* care: extra
But some will spend and some will spare,
And wilfu' folk maun hae their will;
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair, then
Keep mind that ye *maun* drink the *yill*. must ale

O gear will buy me *rigs* o' land, ridges
And gear will buy me sheep and *kye*; cows
But the tender heart o' *leesome* love, loyal
The *gowd* and *siller* canna buy; gold silver
We may be poor—Robie and I—
Light is the burden love lays on;
Content and love brings peace and joy—
What mair hae Queens upon a throne?

[The poet has here very successfully adorned his favorite sentiments in love-matters, and finely contrasted the generous ardor of the young

* A house well provided both in the kitchen and parlor.—J. H.

country lass with the prudent, yet affectionate counsels of her experienced adviser.

The air, which is a very pleasing one, is found in Thomson's "Orpheus Caledonius," 1725.]

BESSY AND HER SPINNIN WHEEL.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

O *LEEZE me on* my spinnin-wheel, commend me to
And leeze me on my *rock* and *reel*; distaff wheel
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,*
And *haps* me *biel* and warm at e'en, covers cosy
I'll set me down and sing and spin,
While *laigh* descends the simmer sun, low
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal,
O leeze me on my spinnin-wheel.

On *ilka* hand the burnies trot, every
And meet below my *theekit* cot; thatched
The scented *birk* and hawthorn white, birch
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdie's nest,
And little fishes' *caller* rest; cool
The sun *blinks* kindly in the *biel*, glances cot
Where blythe I turn my spinnin-wheel.

On lofty *aiks* the *cushats* wail, oaks wood-pigeons
And Echo cons the doolfu' tale;
The *lintwhites* in the hazel *braes*, linnets heights
Delighted, rival *ither's* lays; each other's
The *craik* amang the claver hay, landrail
The *pairtrick* whirrin o'er the *ley*, partridge lea
The swallow jinkin round my *shiel*, cottage
Amuse me at my spinnin-wheel.

* That clothes me comfortably from top to toe.—J. H.

Wi' sma' to sell and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy, Above
O wha wad leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great?
Amid their *flairing*, idle toys, gaudy
Amid their cumbrous, *dinsome* joys, noisy
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessy at her spinnin-wheel?

[Comfort, contentment, and industry combined, is here the poet's theme; and never was the subject treated with more felicity of expression in descriptive song. The melody, taken from Oswald's fifth book, very happily unites with the words.]

FRAGMENTS OF SONG.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

No cold approach, no altered mien,
Just what would make suspicion start;
No pause the dire extremes between,
He made me blest—and broke my heart.

[These lines were inserted by Burns to complete the closing stanza of a song by Miss Cranstoun, who became the second wife of Professor Dugald Stewart, on 26th July 1790. The title of her song is "The tears I shed must ever fall." The poet has added at the bottom of the MS. (now in the British Museum) "I want this song by all means in the fourth volume. In the last line of each stanza, four syllables are repeated to answer the notes—"He made me blest—he made me blest."]

LOVE FOR LOVE.

ITHERS seek they *ken na* what, know not
Features, carriage, and a' that;
Gie me love in her I court,
Love to love maks a' the sport.

Let love sparkle in her e'e;
Let her lo'e na man but me;
That's the *tocher* gude I prize, dowry
There the lover's treasure lies.

[Burns has inserted these lines of his own to form the middle portion of a song in Ramsay's Tea Table Miscellany, called "Jocky fou and Jenny fain," which Johnson has transplanted into the *Museum*.]

FRAGMENT ON MARIA.

How gracefully Maria leads the dance!
She's life itself: I never saw a foot
So nimble and so elegant. It speaks,
And the sweet whispering Poetry it makes
Shames the musician.

Adriano, or, The first of June.

[This elegant little fragment appears, in the poet's holograph, on the back of a MS. copy of the "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots" that apparently had been presented by the author to a lately acquired friend, Mrs. Maria Riddell of Woodley Park, near Dumfries, wife of Mr. Walter Riddell, a younger brother of Captain Riddell, of Glenriddell. The lines were forwarded by Mr. Douglas to London *Notes and Queries*, with the view of obtaining information regarding their authorship. The result was a reply announcing that the fragment had been copied by Burns from a poem by Dr. James Hurdis, called "The Village Curate," published in 1789. On 2d Feb. 1790, Burns ordered a copy of this book from Peter Hill.

The poet seems to have been introduced to this fascinating lady about the time he came to reside with his family in Dumfries. Her mansion stood about four miles to the south of Dumfries. She was as yet under twenty years of age, although a mother, and having a taste for literature and natural history, she delighted in the society of men of talent. The vivid genius of Burns soon attracted her attention, and he became a frequent visitor at Woodley Park. Her father was William Woodley, Governor and Commander-in-chief of St. Kitts, and of the Leeward Islands. She had formed the acquaintance of Mr. Walter Riddell, and ultimately became his wife in the West Indies,

where he possessed an estate; and they appear to have come to reside in Dumfries about the close of 1791. The mansion they selected for their abode was that of Goldielea, the name of which was changed to Woodley Park in compliment to Mrs. Riddell or her family.

Mrs. Riddell, being desirous of publishing a work of her own, entitled "Voyages to the Madeira and Leeward Caribee Islands, with sketches of the natural history of these Islands," obtained, in January, 1792, a letter of introduction from Burns to Mr. William Smellie, the printer, of Edinburgh. In that letter the poet thus hit off some of her characteristics: "She has one unlucky failing—a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it—and a failing that you will easily pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself—where she dislikes or despises, she is apt to make no more a secret of it than where she esteems and respects."]

SAW YE BONIE LESLEY.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1798.)

O SAW ye bonie Lesley,
As she *gaed* o'er the Border? went
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her forever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither! (1)

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects, we before thee;
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The deil he could na *scaith* thee, harm
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonie face,
And say—'I canna wrang thee!'

The powers aboon will *tent* thee, watch over
Misfortune sha'na *steer* thee ; disturb
Thou'rt like themsel' sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie !
That we may *brag* we hae a lass boast
There's *nane again* sae bonie. no other

[The poet communicated the above to his friend and correspondent, Mrs. Dunlop, in a letter dated "Annan Water-foot, 22nd August, 1792."

On the tenth of the following month, he quoted a portion of the above song in a letter to his friend Alexander Cunningham of Edinburgh, and the third and fourth stanzas are thus varied :—

'Thou, bonie Lesley, art a queen,
Thy subjects, we before thee;
Thou, bonie Leslie, art divine,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The vera deil he couldna scaith
Whatever wad belang thee !
He'd look into thy bonie face,
And say—'I canna wrang thee !

The fourth volume of Johnson's *Museum* having been published on 13th August 1792, Mr. George Thomson in the month following put himself in communication with Burns and succeeded in engaging the services of the poet in furnishing songs for an important collection of Scottish Music he and some Edinburgh friends were projecting to bring forth. Accordingly "Bonie Lesley" was among the earlier songs he contributed to Thomson's publication. In order to fit the melody selected, the poet constructed the song into three double stanzas ; and he points out that every seventh line contains eight syllables, while the corresponding third line has only seven syllables, and he instructed Thomson how to suit the music to this peculiarity. The melody selected was "The Collier's bonie Dochter."

The heroine of this song was married to Robert Cumming of Logie, Esq., in June 1799. Her only brother, John Baillie of the Madras Es-

tablishment, died on his passage from India in July 1796. She herself died in Edinburgh in July 1843.

VAR.—(1) Thomson considerably offended the bard by altering this line to "And ne'er made sic anither."]

I'LL MEET THEE ON THE LEA-RIG.*

(CURRIE, 1800.)

WHEN o'er the hill the e'ening star
  Tells bughtin time† is near, my *jo*, sweetheart
And *owsen* frae the furrow'd field oxen
  Return sae *dowf* and weary O; spiritless
Down by the burn, where *birken* buds birchen
  Wi' dew are hangin' clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
  My ain kind Dearie O.

At midnight hour, in *mirkest* glen, darkest
  I'd rove, and ne'er be *eerie* O, scarey
If thro' that glen I *gaed* to thee, went
  My ain kind Dearie O;
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wild,
  And I were ne'er sae weary O,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
  My ain kind Dearie O.

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
  To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;

---

* Lea-rig, literally, the ridge that has lain for some considerable time unploughed. In old times every Scottish farm was divided into "infield," or the land lying convenient to the farm buildings, and regularly cultivated, and "outfield," or the land lying at a distance, and allowed to "lie lea." He means he will meet her in the pasture somewhat remote from the house.—J. H.

† Time for enclosing the sheep in their bughts or folds.—J. H.

At noon the fisher takes the glen
  Adown the burn to steer, my jo:
Gie me the hour o' *gloamin* grey, twilight
  It maks my heart sae cheery O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
  My ain kind Dearie O.

[This song, produced in October 1792, was the first that Burns supplied for Thomson's Collection. That gentleman had sent him a list of eleven songs for which he wished to substitute others by Burns, who, in sending that which forms the text, remarked—"Let me tell you that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads: the songs you specify have all, but one, the faults you remark in them; but who shall rise and say, 'Go to, I will make a better.' On reading over the *Lea-Rig*, I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which, Heaven knows, is poor enough."

The older set of this song which Burns said he had been reading over, was doubtless the one by Fergusson that appears in Johnson's first volume. Although imperfect as a whole, it has some nice touches in it, thus:—

Nae herds wi' *kent* or collie there, shepherd's stick
  Shall ever come to fear ye, O;
But *laverocks* whistling thro' the air, larks
  Shall woo like me their dearie O.
Let others herd their lambs and *yowes*, ewes
  And toil for warld's *gear*, my jo; wealth
My treasure is amang the *knowes*, knolls
  Wi' thee my kind dearie O.

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.

Air—"My Wife's a Wanton Wee Thing,"

(CURRIE, 1800.)

Chorus.—SHE is a *winsome* wee thing, winning
  She is a handsome wee thing,
  She is a lo'esome wee thing,
    This dear wee wife o' mine.

I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'ed a dearer,
And *neist* my heart I'll wear her, next
For fear my jewel *tine*, be lost
She is a winsome, &c.

The warld's *wrack* we share o't ; trouble
The *warstle* and the care o't ; struggle
Wi' her I'll blythely bear it,
And think my lot divine.
She is a winsome, &c.

[In communicating those unpretending, yet very pleasing and natural words, Burns remarked—"If a few lines, smooth and pretty, can be adapted to the tune, it is all you can expect. These were made extempore to it ; and though, on further study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air so well as this random clink."

The "random clink" of Burns did not satisfy Thomson, and he proposed some changes, which the poet politely said were "positive improvements." So uplifted was Thomson with this compliment, that Burns frequently thereafter experienced considerable difficulty in repressing his correspondent's tendency to interfere with the compositions he continued to favor him with. Thomson's proposed improvements were these :—

"O leeze me on my wee thing,
My bonie blythesome wee thing ;
Sae lang's I hae my wee thing,
I'll think my lot divine.
Though warld's care we share o't,
And may see meikle mair o't,
Wi' her I blythely bear it,
And ne'er a word repine."

When Thomson came to publish the song after the poet's death, he had the ridiculous assumption to entitle it, "My love's a winsome wee thing, the first stanza by *Burns*, the other by *G. Thomson*."]

BURNS AND HIGHLAND MARY—

"How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom"

HIGHLAND MARY.

Tune—"Katherine Ogie."

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

YE banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery!
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never *drumlie*: cloudy
There Simmer first unfalds her robes,
And there they langest tarry;[1]
For there I took the last Fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green *birk*, birch
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden Hours on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my Dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my Flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!

And clos'd for ay, the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

[In sending this to Thomson on 14th November 1792, the bard wrote thus:—"The foregoing song pleases myself, I think it is in my happiest manner; you will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and I own that I would be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition."

These deeply affecting verses, which are perhaps even less artificial than the "Address to Mary in Heaven," produced three years before, on the banks of the Nith at Ellisland, are fully as impassioned and real; and yet they were composed without any of the sensational surroundings which are popularly associated with the production of the prior effusion. It has been remarked that there is scarcely a true rhyme in the whole thirty-two lines which form this piece; and yet the ear is perfectly satisfied with its musical rhythm. It is, in short, a fine illustration of that passage in his first Common-place Book, where he speaks of that "certain happy arrangement of old Scotch syllables without any sameness of jingle at the ends of the lines, through adopting which it might be possible for a Scotch Poet, with a nice judicious ear, to set compositions to those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable, independent of rhyme altogether."]

(This song lends confirmation to the view that Mary was for some time associated with the "Castle of Montgomery," or Coilsfield.—J. H.)

([1]) In the original MS. and in all editions of Burns the ungrammatical 5th and 6th lines are perpetuated:

"There simmer first *unfauld* her robes,
And there *the* langest tarry."

We have ventured to print them as we believe Burns meant to write them:

"There simmer first *unfaulds* her robes,
And there *they* langest tarry."—G. G.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

AN OCCASIONAL ADDRESS

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT,

NOVEMBER 26, 1792.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

WHILE Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,
The fate of empires and the fall of Kings;
While quacks of State must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp the Rights of Man;
Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,
The Rights of Woman merit some attention.

First, in the sexes' intermix'd connection,
One sacred Right of Woman is *protection.*—
The tender flower that lifts its head, elate,
Helpless, must fall before the blasts of fate,
Sunk on the earth, defac'd its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th' impending storm.

Our second Right—but needless here is caution,
To keep that right inviolate's the fashion;
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He'd die before he'd wrong it—'tis *decorum.*—
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough rude man had naughty ways;
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up a riot,
Nay even while thus invade a lady's quiet.
Now, thank our stars! these Gothic times are fled;
Now, well-bred men—and you are all well-bred—
Most justly think (and we are much the gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor manners.

For Right the third, our last, our best, our dearest,
That right to fluttering female hearts the nearest;
Which even the Rights of Kings, in low prostration,
Most humbly own—'tis dear, dear *admiration!*
In that blest sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life—immortal love.
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations, airs;
'Gainst such an host what flinty savage dares,
When awful Beauty joins with all her charms—
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?

But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions;
Let Majesty your first attention summon,
Ah! ca ira! THE MAJESTY OF WOMAN!

["In those days," says Robert Chambers, "the little theatre of Dumfries was pretty regularly opened each winter, under the care of a Mr. Sutherland, whom we have already seen Burns patronising while he resided at Ellisland. In the *corps dramatique* was a Miss Fontenelle, a smart and pretty little creature who played 'Little Pickle' in the *Spoiled Child*, and other such characters. Burns admired the performances of Miss Fontenelle, and was disposed to befriend her."

This is the first of two occasional Addresses which he furnished to be recited by her on her benefit nights. In sending this production he thus wrote:—"To you, madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms as a woman would insure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would insure admiration to the plainest figure."

Burns was evidently pleased with this production, for we find that he sent copies of it not only to Mrs. Dunlop and Mr. Graham of Fintry; but he also sent it for publication in the *Edinburgh Gazetteer* of Captain Johnstone.]

EPIGRAM ON SEEING MISS FONTENELLE IN A FAVORITE CHARACTER.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

SWEET naïveté of feature,
Simple, wild, enchanting elf,
Not to thee, but thanks to Nature,
Thou art acting but thyself.

Wert thou awkward, stiff, affected,
Spurning Nature, torturing art;
Loves and Graces all rejected,
Then indeed thou'd'st act a part.

[The poet added in prose—"This, madam, is not the unmeaning or insidious compliment of the frivolous or interested; I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime of Nature excites my admiration or her beauties give me delight."]

EXTEMPORE ON SOME COMMEMORATIONS OF THOMSON.

(CHAMBERS, 1856.)

DOST thou not rise, indignant shade,
And smile wi' spurning scorn,
When they wha *wad hae* starved thy life, would have
Thy senseless turf adorn?

Helpless, alane, thou clamb the brae,
Wi' *meikle* honest toil, much
And *claught* th' unfading garland there— clutched
Thy *sair*-won, rightful spoil. sore

And wear it there! and call aloud
This axiom undoubted—
Would thou hae Nobles' patronage?
First learn to live without it.

To whom hae much, more shall be given,
Is every Great man's faith;
But he, the helpless, needful wretch,
Shall lose the mite he hath.

[This was first published in the *Edinburgh Gazetteer* in December 1792, and the poet enclosed a copy of it to Mr. Graham of Fintry in January following, along with Miss Fontenelle's address on the "Rights of Woman." Chambers remarks regarding it—"There can be no doubt that Burns here had in view the same affair which he had treated in so conceding a style in September of the preceding year. In the interval he had come to see it in its true light."]

AULD ROB MORRIS.

(GEORGE THOMSON'S COLLECTION, 1793.)

THERE'S Auld Rob Morris that *wons* in yon glen, dwells
He's the King o' gude fellows, and the *wale* o' pick
auld men;
He has *gowd* in his coffers, he has *owsen* and gold / oxen
kine,
And ae bonie lassie, his *dautie* and mine. darling

She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in May;
She's sweet as the ev'ning amang the new hay;
As blythe and as artless as the lambs on the lea,*
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

* Her bonie face it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lea;
The ev'ning sun was ne'er sae sweet
As was the blink o' Phemie's e'e. p. 126, Vol. II.

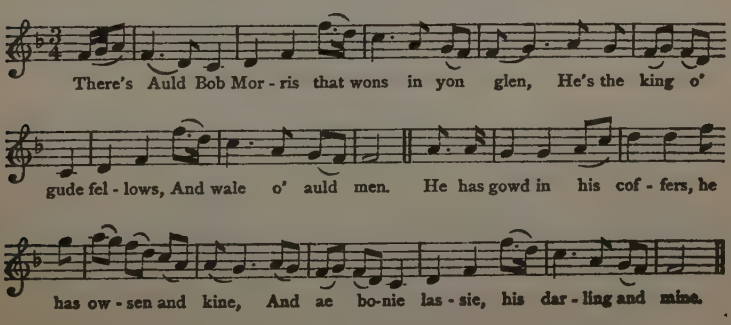
But oh! she's an Heiress, auld Robin's a laird,
And my daddie has nought but a cot-house and yard;
A wooer like me *maunna* hope to come speed, must not
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my *dead.* death

The day comes to me, but delight brings me nane;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane;
I wander *my lane* like a night-troubled ghaist, alone
And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast.

O had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might hae hop'd she wad smil'd upon me!
O how past *describing* had then been my bliss, describing
As now my distraction nae words can express.

[The two opening lines of the above are part of the old ballad given in Johnson's second volume; the rest of the song is entirely original. There is a good deal of nature in the old production, which must be at least two centuries old. It is in form of a dialogue between a country girl of fifteen and her sagacious old mother, who tries to persuade her into a marriage with "Auld Rob Morris" whose age is only four-score. But the girl's description of the person of her old suitor is quite overcoming by its graphic humor; and despite its freedom and grossness, the old ballad still retains its hold in country districts. Part of its popularity, however, must be attributed to its fine old melody, which is one of the best of the Scots airs.

Chambers has an observation that Charlotte Hamilton supplied the picture of artless beauty in the second stanza, but the reader will see that it is merely another rendering of one of the stanzas in the poet's song in praise of Phemie Murray at Ochtertyre.]


There's Auld Bob Mor - ris that wons in yon glen, He's the king o'
gude fel - lows, And wale o' auld men. He has gowd in his cof - fers, he
has ow - sen and kine, And ae bo-nie las - sie, his dar - ling and mine.

DUNCAN GRAY.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1798.)

DUNCAN GRAY cam' here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blythe *Yule*-night when we were *fou*,* Christmas merry
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie *coost* her head fu' high, tossed
Look'd asklent and unco *skeigh*, disdainful
Gart poor Duncan stand *abeigh*; made aloof
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan *fleech'd* and Duncan pray'd; begged
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
Meg was deaf as Ailsa craig,†
Ha, ha, the wooing o't:
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,

---

* Thomson proposed to Currie an alteration here, thus:—"As this line occurs in another Scots song I would propose—

'He was a blythesome lad and true.'

or

'On New Year's Day when we were fou.'

This I pronounce to be one of the very best songs Caledonia can boast of."—G. T.

† A well-known rocky islet in the Firth of Clyde opposite Ayr. It has frequently been a subject for wonder that Burns, who had an eye so exquisitely sensitive to the gentler beauties of nature—the "wimplin' burn," the "gowanny bræ," the "scented birk and hawthorn white," the "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower"—never refers to the grander features of the landscape visible from the neighborhood of Lochlea and Mossgiel, whence can be seen the romantic Isle of Arran crowned with its ruggedly sublime Goatfell, the mountain-peaks environing Lochlomond and Loch Katrine, as well as the bold, bald mass of Ailsa. This—the only allusion to any of the grand features of the estuary of the Clyde—is not called forth by admiration of Ailsa as a striking object in a noble landscape, but is simply the adoption of a popular local simile to express extreme deafness. The absence of all reference to the mountain-scenery of the Highlands, in his diary of his northern tour has been similarly commented on.—J. H.

Grat his e'en baith bleer't* an' blin', wept
Spak o' *lowpin* o'er a *linn;* leaping rocky waterfall
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Time and Chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't:
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't:
Shall I like a fool quoth he,
For a haughty *hizzie* die? huzzy
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't:
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't:
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling Pity *smoor'd* his wrath; smothered
Now they're *crouse* and *canty* baith, strong merry
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

[Few of Burns's songs acquired a more rapid popularity than this; it is so thoroughly pointed and natural throughout; and the melody is so familiar to everybody that the very children learned the language of the ballad. "Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn," wrote the Hon. Andrew Erskine to the poet, after perusing the song, "is a line of itself that should make you immortal."]

* Red, watery, and dim.—J. H.

HERE'S A HEALTH TO THEM THAT'S AWA'.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

HERE'S a health to them that's awa',
Here's a health to them that's awa';
And wha winna wish gude luck to our cause,
May never gude luck be their *fa'!* lot
It's gude to be merry and wise,
It's gude to be honest and true;
It's gude to support Caledonia's cause,
And bide by the buff and the blue.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to Charlie the chief o' the clan,
Altho' that his band be sma'!*
May Liberty meet wi' success!
May Prudence protect her frae evil!
May tyrants and tyranny *tine* i' the mist, get lost
And wander their way to the devil!

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;
Here's a health to Tammie, the *Norlan'* laddie, northern
That lives at the *lug* o' the law.† ear
Here's freedom to them that wad read,
Here's freedom to them that would write,
There's nane ever fear'd that the truth should be heard,
But they whom the truth would *indite*. indict

Here's a health to them that's awa,
An' here's to them that's awa!

---

* Charles James Fox. The *buff and blue* was the Whig livery.

† Hon. Thos. Erskine, afterwards Lord Erskine. "Lug o' the law" is a common Scotch phrase to signify closeness to or connection with the law-courts.—J. H.

Here's to Maitland and Wycombe, let wha does na
like 'em
Be built in a hole in the wa,*
Here's *timmer* that's red at the heart, timber
Here's fruit that is sound at the core;
An may he that wad turn the buff and blue coat
Be turn'd to the back o' the door.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;
Here's chieftain M'Leod, a chieftain worth gowd,
Tho' bred amang mountains o' snaw,†
Here's friends on baith sides o' the firth,‡
And friends on baith sides o' the Tweed;
And wha wad betray old Albion's right,
May they never eat of her bread!

[This noble, patriotic effusion was composed about the close of 1792, and forwarded to the Edinburgh Gazetteer for publication. The version given by Cromek was from a fragmentary copy found among the bard's papers after his death. and is now in the British Museum. The present version is from the complete copy sent by the poet to Captain Johnstone, and which was reprinted in the Scots Magazine for January 1818.

Captain Wm. Johnstone, the proprietor of the Gazetteer, was imprisoned by the Government party on February 16th, 1793, under a treasonable charge. Burns became a subscriber to that paper on 18th November 1792. See Letter to Johnstone of that date.

Chambers thus refers to the song in the text: "Verily, if such a song as this, known to be from the pen of Burns, came under the eye of authority about the close of the year 1792, it could not fail to obtain for him distinction of a certain kind."

At this very time, some information regarding the political opinions and perhaps acts of Burns, did find their way to the Excise Board, and a cloud nearly burst over his head in conse-

* Maitland and Wycombe were two distinguished Liberals of the day. This verse is not in Cromek's copy, and first appeared in the Kilmarnock edition, 1871.

† M'Leod of Dunvegan, Isle of Skye, M.P. for the county of Inverness, a distinguished Reformer.

‡ Solway firth. "Baith sides o' the firth" means both English and Scotch sides.—J. H.

quence. One of the overt acts laid to his charge was that he had proposed the following toast at a social meeting, "Here's the last verse of the last chapter of the last Book of Kings."]

A TIPPLING BALLAD

ON THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK'S BREAKING UP HIS CAMP, AND THE DEFEAT OF THE AUSTRIANS, BY DUMOURIEZ, NOV. 1792.

(Douglas 1877.)

"My dear Cleghorn—By our good friend Crosbie, I send you a song, just finished this moment. May the ——— follow with a blessing. Amen.—*Sanquhar*, 12*th December* 1792,

Robt. Burns."

When Princes and Prelates,
And hot-headed zealots,
A' Europe had set in a *low*, a low. flame
The poor man lies down,
Nor envies a crown,
And comforts himself as he *dow*, as he dow can
And comforts himself as he dow.

The black-headed eagle,
As keen as a beagle,
He hunted o'er height and o'er *howe*, o'er hollow
howe,
In the braes o' Gemappe,
He fell in a trap,
E'en let him come out as he dow, dow, dow,
E'en let him come out as he dow.

* * *

But truce with commotions,
And new-*fangled* notions, fashioned
A bumper, I trust you'll allow;
Here's George our good king,
And Charlotte his queen,
And lang may they *ring* as they dow, dow, reign
dow,
And lang may they ring as they *dow*. do

[The central one of these fragmentary stanzas was given by Cunningham, Pickering, and Motherwell in their respective editions, and was of course, barely intelligible. A principal reason for now attempting to give our readers some idea of the nature of this "tippling ballad" is that in a letter addressed by the bard to Mr. Graham of Fintry on 5th January 1793, he makes reference to it, in a passage commencing:—"As to France." The complete ballad contains eight stanzas and a chorus, and is included in the collection called the "Merry Muses."]

A.D. 1793.

In Politics if thou would'st mix,
And mean thy fortunes be;
Bear this in mind, be deaf and blind,
Let great folk hear and see.

[The original of this characteristic epigram was inscribed on one of the window-panes of the Globe Inn, Dumfries.* On 6th December 1792, the poet had thus written to his Ayrshire correspondent, Mrs. Dunlop:—"We in this country here have many alarms of the Reforming or rather the Republican spirit of *your* part of the kingdom. Indeed we are a good deal in commotion ourselves. For me, I am a placeman, you know; a very humble one indeed, Heaven knows, but still so much as to gag me."

Burns visited Ayrshire in December, and spent four days with Mrs. Dunlop. He also sojourned a night or two with his friends in the vale of Afton, and at Sanquhar, where (as we have seen)

* The veritable pane, so inscribed with the poet's diamond pen is now, along with some others, in the possession of John S. Brunton, Esq., Ludhope House, Galashiels.

he composed and sung the "Tippling Ballad" which our readers have just got some idea of. During his absence at this period "some envious, malicious devil raised a little demur concerning his political principles." Such is his own account in a letter addressed to Mrs. Dunlop on 31st December, which he concludes thus:—"I have set henceforth, a seal on my lips as to these unlucky politics; although to you I must breathe my sentiments." In his letter to Mr. Erskine of Mar, in April following, he expressly states that but for the kind intercession of Mr. Graham of Fintry with the Board of Excise, he would have been deprived of his office. He also added these words, which so well illustrate the satirical lines which form the present text:—"One of our supervisors-general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to enquire on the spot, and to document me—that my business was to act, *not to think;* and that, whatever might be men and measures, it was for me to be silent and obedient."

So early as on 5th January 1793, his mind was so far relieved concerning this "political blast, which threatened his welfare" as to enable him to give Mrs. Dunlop this assurance:—"Although the Board had made me the subject of their animadversions, yet I have the pleasure of informing you that all is set to rights in that quarter." Not altogether "to rights" we suspect; for to Mr. Erskine he appended the following qualification; "only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted."]

POORTITH CAULD AND RESTLESS LOVE.

(Geo. Thomson's Coll., 1798.)

Tune—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

O *poortith cauld*, and restless love, poverty cold
Ye *wrack* my peace between ye; wreck
Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
An' 'twere na for my Jeanie.

Chorus.—O why should Fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining?[1]

The warld's wealth, when I think on,
It's pride and a' the *lave o't;* rest of it
O fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't!
O why, &c.

Her e'en, sae bonie blue betray
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her *o'erword* aye, refrain
She talks o' rank and fashion.
O why, &c.

O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?
O why, &c.

How blest the simple cotter's fate!
He woo's his artless dearie;
The silly *bogles*, wealth and state, goblins
Can never make him *eerie.* scarey
O why, &c.

[This fine song, produced early in January 1793, was prompted by the charms of Jean Lorimer: Gilbert Burns, unwilling to disclose this fact, mystified the question of its heroineship by telling George Thomson that its subject was a "Miss Jane Blackstock, afterwards Mrs. Whitier of Liverpool." Jean Lorimer's father was a nondescript mixture of the farmer and publican at *Kemmis Ha'*, about two miles below Ellisland (on the opposite side of the Nith), who for some time bore the reputation of being in affluent circumstances. He was, however, a practiced smuggler of the excisable commodities he dealt in, and ultimately became a bankrupt. His wife was a deplorable drunkard, during the poet's latter years, as we learn from one of his own letters of that period; and it seems pretty certain that for nearly twelve months prior to his death he felt a distaste to the whole family, perhaps not even excepting the fair enslaver whose charms had inspired so many of his best love-songs.

Chambers gives the story of "Chloris" (the poetical name by which Burns addressed this flaxen-haired syren). He tells us that Miss Lorimer in March 1793, while yet under eighteen years old, contracted a hasty run-away marriage with a young wild-rake farmer from the county of Cumberland who had taken the farm of Barnhill, near Moffat. He adds that the pair had not been many weeks united, when her husband (Whelpdale, by name) was forced by his debts to leave Scotland and abandon his wife.

Burns's note to the song "Craigieburn Wood" (penned for Mr. Riddell in 1793) styles her "Miss Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs. Whelpdale;" so that she was the heroine of the present song, composed two months prior to her so-called marriage. In the month of April following, the poet tells Thomson that he has vowed to make a song to the tune of *Cauld Kail* on the lady he attempted to celebrate in the words "O Poortith Cauld." This he accordingly performed in August thereafter, by producing the song "Come let me take thee to my breast." Along with that, he sent Thomson the song "Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad," which he afterwards admitted to have been inspired by Jean Lorimer. It is certain that she resumed her maiden appellation immediately after being deserted by Whelpdale, and wrote her name "Jane Lorimer," thenceforth till her death in 1831.

The following variation on the chorus is found:—

[1] For weel lo'e I my Jeanie, O,
I doat upon my Jeanie;
How happy I were she my ain,
Tho' I had ne'er a guinea.]

BRAW LADS O' GALA WATER.

(Geo. Thomson's Coll., 1793.)

Braw, braw lads on Yarrow-braes,
They rove amang the blooming heather;
But Yarrow braes, nor Ettrick *shaws* woods
Can match the lads o' Gala Water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I loe him better; above
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonie lad o' Gala Water.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae na *meikle tocher*, much dowry
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll *tent* our flocks by Gala Water. watch

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That *coft* contentment, peace, or pleasure : bought
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warld's treasure.

[This favorite lyric was also composed in the beginning of January 1793. The author became acquainted with the pastoral districts therein referred to, in course of his Border tour in May 1787.

The ancient song, which was supplanted by Burns's version of "Gala Water," possessed a certain kind of merit, as the following specimen will shew :—

Chorus—Braw, braw lads o' Gala Water,
Bonie lads o' Gala Water;
Louden lads will ne'er compare Lothian
Wi' the braw lads o' Gala Water.

Tho' barley *rigs* are fair to see, ridges
Flocks o' sheep are meikle better;
And oats will shake on a windy day,
When the lambs will play by Gala Water,
Braw, braw lads, &c.

Louden lads are black wi' *reek*, smoke
Tevi'dale lads are little better; Teviotdale
But let them a' say what they will,
The *gree gaes* aye down Gala Water, pre-eminence goes
Braw, braw lads, &c.

There's Blindilee, and Torwoodlee,
And Galashiels that rides the water;
But young Ha'tree, he bears the *gree* palm
Of a' the Pringles o' Gala Water,
Braw, braw lads, &c.

What the tourist by the Waverly route now beholds as the extensive manufacturing town of Galashiels was, in the days referred to in the old song, only a few straggling thatched houses planted on the Selkirk side of the Water, inhabited by hand-loom weavers, wool-dressers and dyers. The Laird of Gala Hill, or "Gudeman of Galashiels" as he was termed, was, in the time of Mary Queen of Scots, a stubborn papist, who was fre-

quently under the discipline of the Reforming authorities. His surname was Pringle, which was also the name of all the neighboring lairds mentioned in the closing stanza of the ancient song; and it still is the prevailing surname of the natives of Galashiels. Gala water rises in Midlothian, through which county it flows as a clear pastoral stream nearly its entire course. It enters the shires of Roxburgh and Selkirk in the neighborhood of Galashiels, where it assumes more of the character of a river, and loses itself in the Tweed within two miles below that town, in the vicinity of Abbotsford.

The melody of this song is one of the oldest and most admired of all the Scots airs, and Nathaniel Gow's popular tune, "Cam ye by Athole," is evidently constructed from it.]

SONNET WRITTEN ON THE AUTHOR'S BIRTHDAY,

ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN HIS MORNING WALK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

"I made the following sonnet the other day, which has been so fortunate as to obtain the approbation of no ordinary judge —our friend Syme."—*Letter to Alexander Cunningham, February 20th, 1793.*

SING on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain,
See aged Winter, mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol, clears his furrowed brow.

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light, unanxious heart;
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring ought to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys—
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care,
The mite high Heav'n bestowed, that mite with thee
I'll share.

[Amid the surging of the political emotions of that period, Burns, like the sagacious *John o' Badenyon*, "tuned his pipe and pleased himsel'" with a song or a sonnet.]

LORD GREGORY.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1798.)

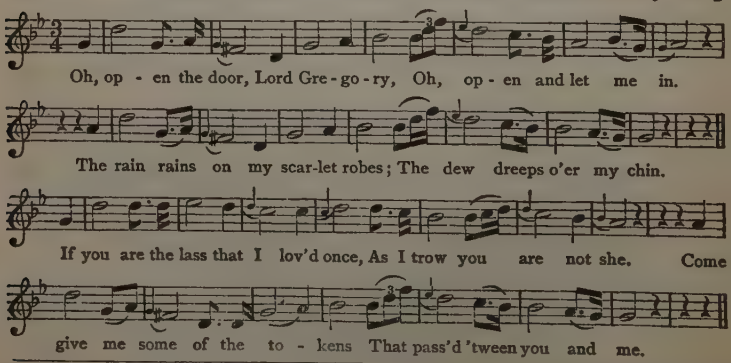
O *mirk*, mirk is this midnight hour, dark
And loud the tempest's roar;
A *waefu'* wanderer seeks thy tower, woful
Lord Gregory, ope thy door.
An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for sake o' thee;
At least some pity on me *shaw*, show
If love it may na be.

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove
By bonie Irwine side,
Where first I own'd that virgin love
I lang, lang had denied.
How aften didst thou pledge and vow,
Thou *wad* for ay be mine! wouldst
And my fond heart, itsel' sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast:
Thou bolt of Heaven that flashest by,
O, wilt thou bring me rest!
Ye mustering thunders from above,
Your willing victim see;
But spare and pardon my *fause* Love, false
His wrangs to Heaven and me.

[This pathetic ballad (founded on the ancient one called "The Lass of Lochryan") was transmitted to Thomson on 26th January 1793. The copy from which the above is printed, shows a few delicate variations. It is a touching manuscript of the bard, written at Brow, on 7th July 1796, exactly fourteen days before his death. His Edinburgh friend, Alexander Cunningham, had requested to be favored with a copy of "Lord Gregory," and accordingly the obliging poet made an effort to transcribe it in that melancholy letter which Currie first gave to the public—"Alas, my friend, I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more. . . . You actually would not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair, my spirits fled—fled! . . . What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself, and keep a horse in country quarters, with a wife and five children at home on £50?"

It will be remembered that the ballad in the text was a favorite one with the author. When he visited Lord Selkirk at St. Mary's Isle in July 1793, in company with Mr. Syme—that gentleman in his well-written narrative of the tour, says, "Urbani, the Italian, sung us many Scottish songs accompanied with instrumental music. The two young ladies of Selkirk sung also. We had the old song of Lord Gregory,* which I asked for to have an opportunity of calling on Burns to recite *his* ballad to that tune. He did recite it, and such was the effect, that a dead silence ensued. It was such a silence as a mind of feeling naturally preserves, when touched with that enthusiasm which banishes every other thought but the contemplation of the sympathy produced. Burns's *Lord Gregory* is in my opinion a most beautiful and affecting ballad. The most fastidious critic may perhaps say some of the sentiments and imagery are of too elevated a kind for such a style of composition, for instance, "Thou bolt of heaven that flashest by," and "Ye mustering thunders," &c., but this is a cold-blooded objection, which will be *said* rather than *felt*."]


Oh, op - en the door, Lord Gre - go - ry, Oh, op - en and let me in.
The rain rains on my scar-let robes; The dew dreeps o'er my chin.
If you are the lass that I lov'd once, As I trow you are not she. Come
give me some of the to - kens That pass'd 'tween you and me.

* We annex a verse of the old song here referred to, with its singularly thrilling melody in the minor mode.

VER. 2.—Ah, wae be to you, Lord Gregory! An ill death may you dee!
You will not be the death of one, But you'll be the death of three.
Oh, don't you mind, Lord Gregory? When first thou called me "bride,"
We changed the rings aff our fingers, Adown by yon burn side.

WANDERING WILLIE.

First Version.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

HERE awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, *haud awa* home; hold away
Come to my bosom, my *ae* only dearie, one
And tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.
Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting;
It was na the blast brought the tear in my e'e:
Now welcome the Simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The Simmer to Nature, my Willie to me.

Ye hurricanes rest in the cave o' your slumbers,
O how your wild horrors a lover alarms!
Awaken ye breezes, *row* gently ye billows, roll
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.
But if he's forgotten his faithfullest Nannie,
O still flow between us, thou wide roaring main;
May I never see it, may I never *trow* it, believe
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain!

[This fine Lyric was sent to Thomson in March 1793, with the remark:—"I leave it to you, my dear sir, to determine whether the above, or the old 'Thro' the lang muir' be the best."]

(A good deal of what Mr. Douglas calls "variegated surmise" has been expended on the subject of this song, some contending for Clarinda, others, Mr. Douglas tells us, for Mrs. Walter Riddell. The latter supposition may be at once dismissed as groundless. In giving his own judgment that gentleman states that the tone of Burns's letter to Clarinda, on learning, in the early part of 1793, of her return, excludes the supposition that the lines could have reference to her, and expresses the opinion that the old song from Herd's collection given below was sufficient of itself to suggest the lines

to him. On this we would simply remark that Burns was not wont to write love-songs "in the abstract." He required a flesh and blood subject to warm his fancy. He was no doubt hurt by Clarinda's failing to intimate her return to him, but we have it on the authority of Horace that the poet is a member of a genus not only irritable but ever variable. We agree, then, with Chambers in thinking that both this song and "My Nannie's Awa," were inspired by Clarinda. The hearing or reading the old song would quite naturally suggest to the poet the friend with whom he once stood in such tender relationship.—J. H.)

(We here annex the original words of Herd's song:—

Here awa, there awa, here awa, Willie,
Here awa, there awa, here awa hame;
Lang have I sought thee, dear I have bought thee,
Now I hae gotten my Willie again.

Thro' the lang muir I have follow'd my Willie,
Thro' the lang muir I have follow'd him hame;
Whatever betide us, nought shall divide us;
Love now rewards all my sorrow and pain.

Here awa, there awa, here awa Willie,
Here awa, there awa, here awa hame,
Come love, believe me, nothing can grieve me,
Ilka thing pleases while Willie's at hame.—J. H.)

WANDERING WILLIE.

Revised Version.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1793.)

HERE awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.
Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears to my e'e,
Welcome now Simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The Simmer to Nature, my Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers,
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken ye breezes, row gently ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.
But oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou wide roaring main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain.

[George Thomson and a committee of taste which surrounded him, had taken Burns's "Wandering Willie" to avizandum, and early in April, a copy amended by Thomson and Erskine was submitted to the poet for his approval, and Currie tells us, "with his usual judgment Burns adopted some of these alterations and rejected others." The reader on comparing the present with the earlier version, will readily judge how far the poet was indebted to the suggestions of his Edinburgh correspondents.]

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH.

IRISH SONG ALTERED BY BURNS.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1793.)

OH, open the door, some pity to shew,
Oh, open the door to me, oh,*
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, oh.

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But caulder thy love for me, oh:
The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
Is naught to my pains frae thee, oh.

---

* This line was originally, "If love it may na be, oh." But having already used that expression in "Lord Gregory," he changed it thus. The same thought occurs in *Mary Morison*,

"If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown."

The wan Moon is setting behind the white wave,
And Time* is setting with me, oh:
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, oh.

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide,
She sees the pale corse on the plain, oh:
"My true love!" she cried, and sank down by his side,
Never to rise again, oh.

[This was transmitted to Thomson in March 1793; but how much of it is old, and what improvements were made by Burns we are not in a position to say; for none of the poet's editors or annotators have thought it worth while to present the original words.

That the genius of Burns has been infused into the lyric is self-evident, and every one who has read Carlyle's Essay on Burns will recall the fine reference to one of its couplets thus:—"We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. . . . It is needless to multiply examples of his graphic power and clearness of sight. One trait of the finest sort we select from multitudes of such among his songs. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling, the saddest environment and local habitation:—

"The wan Moon is setting behind the white wave,
And Time is setting with me, O;
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them nor thee, O."]

LOVELY YOUNG JESSIE.

(Geo. Thomson's Coll., 1798.)

True hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks of the Ayr;
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair:

* Thomson made the unhappy suggestion to alter this word to "Life."

To equal young JESSIE seek Scotland all over;
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain,
Grace, beauty, and elegance fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

Fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily, at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young JESSIE,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.
Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring;
Enthron'd in her *een* he delivers his law: eyes
And still to her charms SHE alone is a stranger;
Her modest demeanor's the jewel of a'.

[Thomson received this contribution in March 1793, with a note from the author, thus:—"I send a song on a celebrated toast in this country to suit the tune *Bonie Dundee*." The lady was Miss Janet or Jesse Staig, second daughter of the Provost of Dumfries, who afterwards married Major William Miller, one of the sons of the poet's former landlord. About eighteen months after this song was composed, Burns made her the subject of a complimentary Epigram, on her recovery from a fever. After a very brief experience of matrimonial joy, she sunk into a decline, and was laid in Dumfries Church-yard in March 1801, at the untimely age of twenty-six.

This lyric has a great deal of artificial beauty in it, reminding one very much of a similar compliment the author paid to another clear-complexioned beauty who passed to an early grave—Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who became the wife of Dr. Adair.

"How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon."]

MEG O' THE MILL.

(DR. CURRIE, 1800.)

O *ken* ye what Meg o' the Mill has *gotten*, know got
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She's gotten a *coof* wi' a *claute* o' siller, blockhead hoard
And broken the heart o' the barley Miller.

The Miller was *strappin*, the Miller was ruddy; stalwart
A heart like a lord, and a hue like a lady;
The laird was a widdifu', bleerit knurl;*
She's left the gude fellow, and taen the churl.

The Miller he *hecht* her a heart leal and loving, offered
The laird did address her wi' matter mair moving,
A fine pacing-horse wi' a clear chained bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonie side-saddle.

O wae on the siller, it is sae prevailin',
And wae on the love that is fixed on a *mailen!* farm
A tocher's† nae word in a true lover's *parl*, speech
But *gie* me my love, and a fig for the *warl!* give world

[This excellent song was sent to Thomson early in April 1793, composed to the air, "Jackey Hume's Lament," or "O bonie lass will ye lie in a barrack;" but the reader will in vain look for it in Thomson's collection. In September following, the poet, in reply to some of Thomson's objections, thus wrote:—"My song, 'Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?' pleases me so much, that I cannot try my hand at another song to the same air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at this; but ilka man wears his belt his ain gate." About the same time Burns forwarded to Johnson a very humorous song bearing the same title, to which we will next introduce the reader.]

MEG O' THE MILL.

Another Version.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1803.)

O KEN ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten,
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
A braw new *naig* wi' the tail o' a *rottan*, nag rat
And that's what Meg o' the Mill has gotten.

* A twisted, blear-eyed, mis-shapen dwarf.—J. H.

† Tocher commonly means the dowry brought by a wife to her husband; here it means simply fortune, or the money settled on the wife by the husband.—J. H.

O ken ye what Meg o' the Mill *loes* dearly, loves
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill loes dearly?
A dram o' gude *strunt* in a morning early, liquor
And that's what Meg o' the Mill loes dearly.

O ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was married,
An' ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was married?
The priest he was oxter'd,* the clark he was carried,
And that's how Meg o' the Mill was married.

O ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was bedded,
An' ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was bedded?
The groom gat sae fu', he fell *awald* beside it, powerless
And that's how Meg o' the Mill was bedded.

[George Thomson seems to have reckoned the former of these lyrics rather too vulgar for his select publication; and in a note he affects surprise that the poet thought so highly of it. What then would he have said had Burns offered him the present version? Robert Chambers could so ill-appreciate its humor, that, in a foot-note, he styles it "so rude and wretched a production that I cannot suppose many words of it have been supplied by so masterly a pen." We must be excused for being impressed with the belief that it is, as Johnson has labelled it, entirely "written by Robert Burns." It presents as graphic a picture of real life as Teniers ever painted.]

THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

Air—"The Mill, mill, O."

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1793.)

WHEN wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning;

* Was held up by the arm-pits.

I left the lines and tented field,
  Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
  A poor and honest sodger.

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
  My hand unstain'd wi' plunder;
And for fair Scotia, hame again,
  I cheery on did wander:
I thought upon the banks o' Coyl,
  I thought upon my Nancy,
I thought upon[1] the witching smile
  That caught my youthful fancy.

At length I reach'd the bonie glen,
  Where early life I sported;
I pass'd the mill and trysting thorn,
  Where Nancy aft I courted:
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,
  Down by her mother's dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
  That in my e'en was swelling.

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, Sweet lass,
  Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O! happy, happy may he be,
  That's dearest to thy bosom:
My purse is light, I've far to *gang*,
  And fain wad be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my king and country lang—
  Take pity on a sodger.

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
  And lovelier was than ever;
Quo' she, A sodger ance I lo'ed,
  Forget him shall I never:

Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it;
That gallant badge—the dear cockade,
Ye're welcome for the sake o't.

She gaz'd—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne pale like *ony* lily;[2] then any
She sank within my arms, and cried,
Art thou my ain dear Willie?*
By Him who made yon sun and sky!
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man; and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded!

The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted;
Tho' poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair we'se ne'er be parted.
Quo' she, My grandsire left me *gowd*, gold
A *mailen plenish'd* fairly; farm stocked
And come, my faithfu' sodger lad,
Thou'rt welcome to it dearly!

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honor:
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger;
Remember he's his country's stay,
In day and hour of danger.

---

* This beautiful point in the ballad, which Burns singled out as the most telling part for illustration in a picture which David Allan proposed to paint from the song, is almost borrowed from the old ballad called "Geordie," which our poet had furnished to Johnson, No. 346, Vol. IV.

"When first she look'd the letter on,
She was baith red and rosy;
But she had na read a word but twa,
Till she wallow't like a lily."

[This charming ballad, destined to become so widely popular, was sent to Thomson early in April 1793, without a remark from the author, so far as appears in the preserved correspondence. Thomson, with his usual obtuseness, found fault with lines third and fourth, and substituted for the expressive imagery in the text the common-place lines,

"And eyes again with pleasure beam'd,
That had been blear'd with mourning."

Mr. Thomson was hurrying on towards the completion of his first part, containing twenty-five songs, which appeared on 1st July 1793. In June the poet had written to him disapprovingly of any change in the couplet referred to, thus:—"I cannot alter the disputed lines in the *Mill, mill O.* What you think a defect, I esteem as a positive beauty: so you see how doctors differ."

In the copy of that Part which the poet presented to Miss Graham of Fintry, the lines of Thomson are carefully deleted, and the original reading interlined with the pen.

The following variations are also there inserted in MS:—

[1] And ay I mind't. [2] Syne wallow't like a lily.]

(A correspondent of George Thomson, quoted by Chambers, says that an incident at Brownhill Inn suggested this exquisitely tender song to Burns. He was "one summer afternoon at the Inn, with a couple of friends, when a poor wayworn soldier passed the window. Of a sudden it struck the poet to call him in and get the story of his adventures; after listening to which, he all at once fell into one of these fits of abstraction not unusual to him. He was lifted to the region where he had his 'garland and singing-robes' about him, and the result was the admirable song which he sent you for *The Mill, Mill O.*" Chambers adds that "Mill-Mannoch, a sweet pastoral scene on the Coyle, near Coylton Kirk, is supposed to have been the spot where the poet imagined the rencontre of the soldier and his mistress to have taken place."—J. H.)

VERSICLES, A.D. 1793.

THE TRUE LOYAL NATIVES.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

"At this period of our poet's life, when private animosity was made the ground of private quarrel, the following foolish verses were sent as an attack on Burns and his friends for their political opinions."

THE LOYAL NATIVES' VERSES.

"Ye Sons of Sedition, give ear to my song,
Let Syme, Burns, and Maxwell pervade every throng,
With Cracken the attorney and Mundell the quack,
Send Willie, the monger, to hell with a smack."

These lines having been handed over the table to Burns, at a convivial meeting, he instantly indorsed the subjoined reply."
—*Reliques*, p. 168.

YE true "Loyal Natives" attend to my song,
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long;
From Envy and Hatred your core is exempt,
But where is your shield from the darts of Contempt?

[The "Loyal Native Club" of the Burgh of Dumfries was formed on 18th January 1793, "for preserving the Peace, Liberty, and Property, and for supporting the Laws and Constitution of the Country." The president of the Association was Commissary Goldie; and Mr. Francis Sprott, town-clerk, acted as its secretary.

The *Dumfries Journal* of the period records that "On Tuesday, June 4, 1793, (the King's Birthday), an unusual display of loyalty eminently manifested itself through all ranks of people in this place. The younger members of the community having procured two effigies of Tom Paine, paraded with them through the different streets of this burgh; and at six o'clock in the evening consigned them to the bonfires, amid the patriotic applause of the surrounding crowd. A few ladies on the morning of the auspicious day, brought bandeaux of blue satin ribbon embroidered by their own hands with the words, 'GOD SAVE THE KING!' which were presented in their name to the members of the 'Loyal Native Club,' by the president, and these were worn all day round the hats of

the members." In the evening those young patriots went in a body to a grand ball in the Assembly, and wore the cherished bandeaux across their breasts.

It was of this period that Lockhart thus writes:—"All men's eyes were upon Burns. He was the standing marvel of the place; his toasts, his jokes, his epigrams, his songs, were the daily food of conversation and scandal; and he soon began to be considered among the local admirers and disciples of the good old King and his minister, as the most dangerous of all the apostles of sedition,—and to be shunned accordingly." These remarks are followed by the introduction of the affecting anecdote related to that biographer by David M'Culloch, younger of Ardwell, which Carlyle so strikingly refers to in his review of Lockhart's work. "Burns was walking alone on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. Mr. M'Culloch dismounted and joined Burns, who on his proposing to him to cross the street, said 'Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now,' and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzell Baillie's pathetic ballad:—

"His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
(His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new)
But now he lets't wear ony gate it will hing,
And casts himself dowie upon the corn-*bing*."] chest

ON COMMISSARY GOLDIE'S BRAINS.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

LORD, to account who dares thee call,
Or e'er dispute thy pleasure?
Else why, within so thick a wall,
Enclose so poor a treasure?

[This biting bit of sarcasm displays the poet's manner of throwing "the darts of contempt" on the whole core of *Loyal Natives*—"When the Head is sick, the whole body is full of trouble."]

LINES INSCRIBED IN A LADY'S POCKET ALMANAC.

(STEWART, 1801.)

GRANT me, indulgent Heaven, that I may live,
To see the miscreants feel the pains they give;
Deal Freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
Till Slave and Despot be but things that were.

THANKSGIVING FOR A NATIONAL VICTORY.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

YE hypocrites! are these your pranks?
To murder men, and give God thanks!
Desist, for shame!—proceed no further,
God wont accept your thanks for MURTHER!

LINES ON THE COMMEMORATION OF RODNEY'S VICTORY.

(STEWART, 1801.)

INSTEAD of a song, boys, I'll give you a toast;
Here's to the memory of those we have lost!—
That we *lost*, did I say?—nay, by Heav'n, that we *found;*
For their fame it will last while the world goes round.
The next in succession I'll give you's THE KING!
Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he swing!
And here's the grand fabric, the free CONSTITUTION,
As built on the base of our great Revolution!

And longer with Politics not to be cramm'd,
Be ANARCHY curs'd, and be TYRANNY damn'd!
And who would to LIBERTY e'er prove disloyal,
May his son be a hangman—and himself his first trial!

[Admiral Rodney's great victory over the French fleet, off Dominica, in the West Indies, was so far back as April 12, 1782, and the Admiral, who was created a Peer in consequence, died in 1792. It was the custom in loyal Dumfries and elsewhere to commemorate that victory year after year, and Burns did not shrink to join in such manifestations, whatever were his real opinions regarding aggressive warfare. The sentiments expressed in the above toast are highly patriotic and unusually loyal, reminding one much of his grand Volunteer Song produced two years after this period.

It must not be supposed that Burns was altogether a "castaway," from the respectables of Dumfries, either in 1793 or at any other period of his sojourn there. There are many evidences to the contrary. We instance one. A public library was opened in the Burgh, about the close of 1792; and Burns, who aided in establishing it, was admitted a free member thereof on 5th March 1793. In September following his name appears as a member of committee, and on 30th of that month he presented four books to the Library,—"Humphrey Clinker," "Julia de Roubigné," "Knox's History of the Reformation," and "De Lolme on the British Constitution." The last named volume bore the following holograph inscription:—"Mr. Burns presents this book to the Library, and begs they will take it as a creed of British Liberty—until they find a better.—*R. B.*" No sooner had these books been delivered, than the poet began to feel certain qualms of uneasiness that the witty *double entendre* might be noticed and seized as a handle against his political integrity. He accordingly called next day at the Library, and pasted the fly leaf that bore the inscription against the back of the frontispiece portrait which formed the next leaf. That volume is still in the Library, and every curious stranger asks a sight of it; for on holding the portrait up against the light, the inscription can be clearly read.]

(It is undoubtedly true that in a period of intense excitement Burns had given offence to several extra-loyal persons in the Burgh and neighborhood by his free expressions (both written and spoken) in favor of the cause of universal liberty, but he had, nevertheless, still many staunch friends and sincere admirers in the old Burgh and the surrounding district, who remained true to him till his death.—J. H.)

KIRK AND STATE EXCISEMEN.

(STEWART, 1801.)

YE men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering
'Gainst poor Excisemen? Give the cause a hearing:
What are your Landlord's rent-rolls?—taxing ledgers!
What Premiers?—what ev'n Monarchs?—mighty Gaugers!
Nay, what are Priests? (those seeming godly wise-men,)
What are they, pray, but Spiritual Excisemen!

THE RAPTURES OF FOLLY.

(STEWART, 1801.)

THOU greybeard, old Wisdom! may boast of thy treasures;
Give me with old Folly to live;
I grant thee thy calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures,
But Folly has raptures to give.

[The first of these Epigrams was inscribed by the poet on a window at the King's Arms Tavern, Dumfries; and the latter was similarly inscribed on a window of the Globe Tavern there. They speak for their own parentage, and tell their own story.]

GRACE AFTER MEAT.

(STEWART, 1801.)

L—D, we thank, and thee adore,
For temporal gifts we little merit;
At present we will ask no more—
Let William Hislop give the spirit.

GRACE BEFORE AND AFTER MEAT.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

O LORD, when hunger pinches sore,
  Do thou stand us in stead,
And send us, from thy bounteous store,
  A *tup* or *wether* head! Amen. ram ewe

O LORD, since we have feasted thus,
  Which we so little merit,
Let Meg now take away the flesh,
  And Jock bring in the spirit! Amen.

[These "Graces" appear to have been emitted extemporaneously at the poet's favorite "howff"—the Globe Tavern, of which Wm. Hislop was landlord. In regard to the latter pair, Chambers explains that the poet, in company with Wm. Nicol and Allan Masterton from Edinburgh, arrived unexpectedly one evening when Mrs. Hislop, had no edibles prepared that were calculated to appease their craving appetites, except a tup's head and trotters which she had meant for her own family meal. These were offered and accepted, and Burns was asked to officiate as chaplain over the little Godsend of rations. Meg and Jock were probably the table-servants.]

IMPROMPTU ON GENERAL DUMOURIEZ'S DESERTION FROM THE FRENCH REPUBLICAN ARMY.

(CROMEK, 1810.)

YOU'RE welcome to Despots, Dumouriez;
You're welcome to Despots, Dumouriez:
  How does Dampiere do?
  Aye, and Bournonville too?
Why did they not come along with you, Dumouriez?

I will fight France with you, Dumouriez;
I will fight France with you, Dumouriez;
I will fight France with you,
I will take my chance with you
By my soul, I'll dance with you, Dumouriez.

Then let us fight about, Dumouriez;
Then let us fight about, Dumouriez;
Then let us fight about,
Till Freedom's spark be out,
Then we'll be d—d, no doubt, Dumouriez.

[Dumouriez, after achieving important triumphs as a General in the army of the French Republic, somewhat unexpectedly veered round in favor of the interests of the Monarchy, and was only prevented by fortuitous circumstances from betraying his troops into the enemy's hands. Dampiere, and Bournonville, referred to in the opening stanza, were respectively a brother General, and an emissary of the Convention, whom he had calculated on persuading to follow his example; but in this he was disappointed. Dumouriez deserted and made his escape from France, on 5th April 1793.

Burns, as might have been anticipated, did not strictly adhere to the line of policy he assured Mrs. Dunlop, in the preceding month of January, he had chalked out for himself:—"I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips as to these unlucky politics." At convivial parties he gave free vent to his feelings, and often unguardedly free utterance to his words. On one of those occasions, when the health of William Pitt was proposed and drunk with a will, he followed it up by craving "a bumper to the health of a much better man—General Washington!" *

The reader will understand that the verses in the text form a pretty close parody of an old-fashioned song that was then in vogue as a Bacchanalian rant, although now allied to more tender words, namely, "Robin Adair." As the old version is now almost unknown, we annex it, to show the closeness of Burns's parody:—

You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair,
You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair,
How does Luke Gardner do? aye, and John Mack'ril too?
O why did they not come with you, Robin Adair?

* Burns's admiration for Washington was unbounded. This is evidenced by his making him the principal figure in his great Ode to Liberty, which we

I will drink wine with you, Robin Adair,
I will drink wine with you, Robin Adair,
I will drink wine with you, good rack and brandy too,
By my soul I'll get drunk with you, Robin Adair.

Come, let us drink about, Robin Adair,
Come, let us drink about, Robin Adair,
Come let us drink about, and drink a hogshead out,
Then we'll be drunk, no doubt, Robin Adair.]

THE LAST TIME I CAME O'ER THE MOOR.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

THE last time I came o'er the moor,
And left Maria's dwelling,
What throes, what tortures passing cure,
Were in my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And yet in secret languish;[1]
To feel a fire in every vein,
Yet dare not speak my anguish.

The wretch of love unseen, unknown,
I fain my crime would cover:
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan,[2]
Betray the guilty lover.
I know my doom must be despair,
Thou wilt nor canst relieve me;
But oh, Maria, hear my[3] prayer,
For Pity's sake, forgive me!

The music of thy tongue I heard,
Nor wist while it enslav'd me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
Till fear no more had sav'd me:

---

publish elsewhere in this edition, for the first time in its complete state. There he conjoins him with Alfred the Great of England and with Wallace, the immortal hero of Scotland.—G. G.

The unwary sailor thus, aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing,
'Mid circling horrors yields at last
To overwhelming ruin.

[This finely expressed, but rather daring appeal in lyrical form to Mrs. Walter Riddell, was forwarded to George Thomson in April 1793. No trace of that gentleman's remarks concerning it appear in the Thomson correspondence; but it will be seen that Burns in November 1794 remodelled the song, and cancelled the version in the text.

The following variations occur in the first version:—

[1] Condemn'd to see my rival's reign,
While I in secret languish.
[2] Love's veriest wretch, despairing, I
Fain, fain my crime would cover,
The unweeting groan the bursting sigh.
[3] hear one prayer.]

BLYTHE HAE I BEEN ON YON HILL.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

BLYTHE hae I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me;
Careless *ilka* thought and free, every
As the breeze flew o'er me;
Now nae langer sport and play,
Mirth or sang can please me;
LESLEY is sae fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
Hopeless love declaring;
Trembling, I *dow nocht* but *glow'r*,*
Sighing, dumb despairing!

* Can do nothing but stare.—J. H.

If she winna ease the *thraws* throes
In my bosom swelling,
Underneath the grass-green sod,
Soon *maun* be my dwelling. must

[The poet, in sending this to Thomson in June 1793, thus wrote:—"You know Fraser, the hautboy player in Edinburgh: he is here instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this county. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one well-known as a reel, by the name of 'The Quaker's Wife;' and which I remember, a grand-aunt of mine used to sing by the name of 'Liggeram Cosh, my bonie wee lass.' Mr. Fraser plays it slow, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it, that I made a song for it, which I here subjoin, and enclose Fraser's set of the tune. I think the song is not in my worst manner."

LOGAN BRAES.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

Burns, in his letter to Thomson of 25th June 1793, says:—"Have you ever, my dear sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation, on reading of, or seeing how, the mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste, out of the wantoness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of *Logan Water*, and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some Public Destroyer, and overwhelmed with private distress—the consequence of a country's ruin.

If I have done anything at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three-quarters of an hour's lucubrations in my elbow-chair, ought to have some merit":—

O LOGAN, sweetly didst thou glide,
That day I was my Willie's bride,
And years *sin syne* hae o'er us run, since then
Like Logan to the simmer sun:

But now thy flowery banks appear
Like *drumlie* Winter, dark and drear, muddy
While my dear lad *maun* face his *faes*, must foes
Far, far frae me and Logan *braes*. banks

Again the merry month of May
Has made our hills and vallies gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers;
Blythe Morning lifts his rosy eye,
And Evening's tears are tears o' joy:
My soul, delightless a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile;
But I wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

O wae be to you, Men o' State,
That brethren rouse in deadly hate!
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tear, the orphan's cry?*
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie hame to Logan braes!

[The reader who has carefully perused the above song with its prose introduction, will naturally be curious to know what George

* Originally—Ye mindna, 'mid your cruel joys,
The widow's tears, the orphan's cries.

Thomson said regarding it. Why! the closing verse of the song, which is the most valuable portion of it, made him tremble—not with indignation, but with fear, lest, in publishing the entire song, he (being a Government placeman himself) might be implicated in the seditious sentiments it seemed to indulge in! His remark speaks for itself—"I thank you for your excellent song to *Logan Water*. Your apostrophe to statesmen is admirable; but I am not sure if it is quite suitable to the supposed gentle character of the fair mourner who speaks it."

Thomson took good care to throw the risk of first publishing this *seditious* song upon Dr. Currie. At an after period, when charged with poltroonery and meanness in his transactions with Burns, he demanded great credit to himself for allowing some sixty songs, which Burns gratuitously supplied to him, to be published in 1800, for the benefit of the poet's widow and family; but out of that sixty he had hasted to publish beforehand (for his own benefit), full forty, and "Logan Braes" he washed his hands clear of, until more than one edition of it had been given to the world by Currie. The closing couplet of the first stanza is part of a fine song by John Mayne on same subject, composed prior to this.]

(The statement in the foregoing note shows Thomson to have been, not only one of the meanest of men, but also one of the most brazen-faced, and destitute of the slightest sense of gratitude or decorum. One would be glad if we could attribute his conduct to stupidity or poverty. But the coarse rudeness of his reply precludes any mitigating supposition.—J. H.)

O WERE MY LOVE YON LILAC FAIR.

Air—"Hughie Graham."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

O WERE my love yon Lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the Spring,
And I, a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing!
How I wad mourn when it was torn
By Autumn wild, and Winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

O *gin* my love were yon red rose, if
That grows upon the castle wa';
And I mysel a drap o' dew,
Into her bonie breast to fa'!
O there, beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till *fley'd* awa by Phœbus' light! scared

[Only the first double-stanza of this production is by Burns. In June 1793 he forwarded the song to Thomson, asking him if he was acquainted with the closing eight lines, which had been published as an old fragment in Herd's collection.]

BONIE JEAN.—A BALLAD.

To its ain tune.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

THERE was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen;
When a' our fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonie Jean.

And ay she wrought her mammie's *wark*, work
And ay she sang sae merrilie;
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the *brawest* lad, finest
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had *owsen*, sheep, and *kye*, oxen cows
And wanton *naigies* nine or ten. nags

He *gaed* wi' Jeanie to the *tryste*, went market
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the *down;* market-green
And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was *tint*, her peace was *stown!* lost stolen

As in the bosom of the stream,
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love
Within the breast of Bonie Jean.*

And now she works her mammie's wark,
And ay she sighs wi' care and pain;
Ye wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad make her weel again.

But did na Jeanie's heart *loup* light, leap
And did na joy *blink* in her e'e; glance
As Robie tauld a tale o' love:
Ae e'enin on the lily lea?

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in *ilka* grove; every
His cheek to hers he fondly laid,
And whisper'd thus his tale o' love:

"O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear;
O canst thou think to fancy me,
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to *tent* the farms wi' me?" take care of

"At barn or *byre* thou shalt na drudge, cow-stable
Or naething else to trouble thee;[1]
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me."

* This verse is wanting in early manuscripts. In the Thomson MS. the poet attaches a query to it thus: "Is this stanza not original?"

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na:
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was ay between them twa.

[This much admired ballad was forwarded in a completed state to Thomson on 2nd July 1793. Mr. M'Murdo and his family about that period had their residence in or near Dumfries, and Mr. Stephen Clarke, the musical editor of Johnson's Museum, had been engaged to give music-lessons to his daughters, Miss Jean and Miss Philadelphia, or Phillis. "Many a merry squeeze," accordingly, would the poet enjoy with his friend Clarke in the evenings at the Globe Tavern during that season. To Thomson he thus wrote along with the present song:—"I have just finished the following ballad, and as I do think it in my best style I send it to you. You had the tune, with a verse or two of the song from me a while ago. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns's wood-note wild, is very fond of it, and has given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return me the music. The song you may keep, as I remember it."

It appears that Thomson urged some objections to the song, and the poet in reply wrote thus:—"The phrase 'mammie's wark,' universally among the peasantry signifies *mother's work:* if you think this last better, you may adopt it. Your other objection to this song will vanish when you consider that I have not painted Miss M'Murdo in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager; consequently the utmost simplicity of thought and expression was necessary." On the following month, in sending Thomson the song, "Adown winding Nith I did wander," the poet says:—"Mr. Clarke begs you will give Miss Phillis a corner in your Book, as she is a particular Flame of his, and out of compliment to him I made the song. She is a Miss Phillis M'Murdo, sister to the 'Bonie Jean' which I sent you some time ago."

We have learned nothing of the after fate of the heroine of this ballad, except that she married a Mr. Crawford.

[1] "Thy handsome foot thou shalt na set
In barn or byre to trouble thee."]

(Whatever Burns may have said, by way of compliment, about Miss Jean M'Murdo's inspiring the above song, we think any one who carefully reads it will see that his own Jean, and the remembrance of their courtship, was the real keynote of inspiration.—G. G.)

LINES ON JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

BLEST be M'Murdo to his latest day!
No envious cloud o'ercast his evening ray;
No wrinkle, furrow'd by the hand of care,
Nor ever sorrow add one silver hair!
O may no son the father's honor stain,
Nor ever daughter give the mother pain!

[The original inscription of these lines is said to have been on a pane of glass in the gentleman's house which was, at that period, in the immediate neighborhood of Dumfries. Mrs. M'Murdo was a daughter of Mr. Blair, who was Provost of Dumfries in 1790, 1791, 1792. Her tombstone in St. Michael's Churchyard, Dumfries, shews that she died on 19th April 1836, at the age of eighty-seven. Her sister was the wife of Col. De Peyster, to whom Burns addressed an Epistle in 1796.

Some account of the M'Murdo family is contained in our last note.]

EPITAPH ON A LAP-DOG.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

IN wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
Now, half extinct your powers of song,
Sweet "Echo" is no more.

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
Now, half your din of tuneless sound
With "Echo" silent lies.

[Mr. John Syme, of Ryedale, with whom the poet was in the closest terms of intimacy throughout the Dumfries period of his life, contributed a very lively account to Dr. Currie, of a tour

through Galloway that he had with Burns for a week or two commencing on 27th July 1793. Arriving at the house of Mr. Gordon of Kenmure in the evening, the excursionists were hospitably entertained there for three days. "Mrs. Gordon's lap-dog *Echo* was dead. She would have an epitaph for him. Several had been made. Burns was asked for one. This was setting Hercules to his distaff. He disliked the subject, but to please the lady, he would try." The above is what he produced on the spot.]

EPIGRAMS AGAINST THE EARL OF GALLOWAY.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

"From Gatehouse we went next day to Kirkcudbright, through a fine country. But I must tell you that Burns had got a pair of *jemmy* boots for the journey, which had got thoroughly wet, and then dried in such a manner that it was not possible to get them on again. The brawny poet tried force, and tore them to shreds. A whiffling vexation of this sort is more trying to the temper than a serious calamity. We were going to Saint Mary's Isle, the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, and the forlorn Burns was discomfited at the thought of his ruined boots. A sick stomach and a head-ache lent their aid, and the man of verse was quite *accablé*. I attempted to reason with him. Mercy on us, how he did fume and rage! Nothing could re-instate him in temper. I tried various expedients, and at last hit on one that succeeded. I shewed him the House of Garlies, across the bay of Wigton. Against the Earl of Galloway, with whom he was offended, he expectorated his spleen, and regained a most agreeable temper. He was in a most epigrammatic humor indeed!"—*John Syme's Narrative of the Tour.*

WHAT dost thou in that mansion fair?
Flit, Galloway, and find
Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
The picture of thy mind.

No Stewart art thou, Galloway,
The Stewarts all were brave;
Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
Not one of them a knave.

BRIGHT ran thy line, O Galloway,
Thro' many a far-famed sire!
So ran the far-famed Roman way,
And ended in a mire.

On Mr. Syme suggesting that the Earl would resent such pasquinades, if made public.

SPARE me thy vengeance, Galloway!
In quiet let me live:
I ask no kindness at thy hand,
For thou hast none to give.

[Chambers notices the foregoing string of spleen, in rather too serious a style, thus:—"These epigrams launched at this respectable nobleman have no other effect than to make moderate-minded men lament their author's own subordination of judgment to spleen." The Earl died in 1806, and Chambers quotes the very favorable obituary notice of him given in a newspaper of the day, and philosophically adds:—"For once let a friendly obituary notice be accepted in evidence: it was at least nearer the truth than Burns's election lampoons and epigrams."]

EPIGRAM ON THE LAIRD OF LAGGAN.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

"He was in a most epigrammatic humor indeed! Having settled Lord Galloway, he afterwards fell on humbler game. There is one Morine whom he does not love. He had a passing blow at him."—*John Syme's Narrative.*

WHEN Morine, deceas'd, to the Devil went down,
'Twas nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown;
"Thy fool's head," quoth Satan, "that crown shall wear never,
I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so clever."

[This epigram Burns recorded in the Glenriddell volume now at Liverpool, with the name of its victim and locality filled in.

In connection with the poet's visit to the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, it is stated by Cunningham, that at one of the meals there, Burns was asked to say Grace, and he delivered what is usually styled "The Selkirk Grace."

SOME folk hae meat that canna eat,
And some can eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat,
So let the Lord be thanket!]

SONG—PHILLIS THE FAIR.

Tune—"Robin Adair."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

WHILE larks, with little wing, fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing Spring, forth I did fare:
Gay the sun's golden eye
Peep'd o'er the mountains high;
Such thy morn! did I cry, Phillis the fair.

In each bird's careless song, glad I did share;
While yon wild-flow'rs among, chance led me there!
Sweet to the op'ning day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
Such thy bloom! did I say, Phillis the fair.

Down in a shady walk, doves cooing were;
Mark'd I the cruel hawk caught in a snare:
So kind may fortune be,
Such make his destiny,
He who would injure thee, Phillis the fair.

[In sending the above to Thomson, the poet says:—"Here I have tried *Robin Adair*, and you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a d——d cramp, out-of-the-way measure,

that I despair of doing anything better to it. . . . So much for namby-pamby. I may after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse; there I always find myself more at home."

The reader will perceive that the subject of the above was Miss Phillis M'Murdo, and that Stephen Clarke was the supposed singer.]

SONG—HAD I A CAVE.

Tune—"Robin Adair."

(G. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

"That crinkum-crankum tune *Robin Adair*, has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured, in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavored to do the idea justice, as follows:—

HAD I a cave on some wild distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the wave's dashing roar;
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more!

Falsest of womankind, can'st thou declare
All thy fond, plighted vows fleeting as air!
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury;
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there!

[The poet's lyric success never went beyond this grand result, apparently reached with so little effort—not in Scots verse, but pure English. It came to Thomson almost directly on the back of the trifling song penned for the Music Master of the fair Phillis. In the note to the song "She's Fair and She's Fause," Vol.

III, p. 45, a promise was given to return to the subject-matter of the song there commented on, when that which forms the present text was reached. Alexander Cunningham tried the effect of the poet's "last great antihectic," by entering into the marriage-state on 10th April 1792. We believe the lady he selected was in every respect worthy of his love and esteem; nevertheless it is certain that down to the close of his life, he never ceased to feel the effects of the hopeless cut which he experienced on reading the marriage intimation quoted by us at page 45, Vol. III., dated 13th January 1789.

Such was the strength of Cunningham's craze for the object of his blighted love that, long after she had jilted him, and long after he had applied the remedy above referred to, he was observed on many an evening stealthily to traverse for hours the opposite side of Princes Street where she resided, in order that he might catch a glimpse of her person. He would pause now and again opposite her windows, and seem gratified even with a passing glance of her shadow cast on the white screen by the light within —then he would burst into tears, and wend his way slowly home by the most lonely path, absorbed in morbid contemplation. He survived till 27th January 1812.

In 1838, Robert Chambers thus wrote regarding the widow of Dr. Dewar:—"One evening, a very few years ago, a friend of mine, visiting a musical family who resided in Princes Street nearly opposite St. John's Chapel, chanced to request one of the young ladies to sing 'Had I a cave,' &c. She was about to comply, when it was recollected that the heroine of the lyric lived in the flat below, an aged widow, who might overhear it. For that reason the intention of singing the song was laid aside."]

SONG—BY ALLAN STREAM.

(Geo. Thomson's Coll., 1799.)

By Allan stream I chanc'd to rove,
While Phebus sank beyond Benledi;
The winds were whispering thro' the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready:
I listen'd to a lover's sang,
An' thought on youthfu' pleasures mony;
And ay the wild-wood echoes rang—
"O, dearly do I lo'e thee, Annie!"

"O, happy be the woodbine bower,
Nae nightly *bogle* make it *eerie;* goblin dismal
Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
The place and time I met my Dearie!
Her head upon my throbbing breast,
She, sinking, said, 'I'm thine for ever!'
While mony a kiss the seal imprest—
The sacred vow we ne'er should sever."

The haunt o' Spring's the primrose-brae,
The Summer joys the flocks to follow;
How cheery thro' her short'ning day,
Is Autumn in her weeds o' yellow;
But can they melt the glowing heart,
Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure?
Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

["Autumn is my propitious season, I make more verses in it than in all the year else. God bless you!"—so wrote the exulting poet when he forwarded the above song to Thomson. *August 19th* was the date of the letter which enclosed it. He had performed the Galloway Tour—had met with Clarke at the Globe, where he discovered that "the Georgium Sidus was out of tune." He had sent Thomson a song "Let me in this ae nicht," which we shall not trouble the reader with. He had composed and forwarded "Phillis the fair"—followed quickly by the immortal "Had I a cave." Then he sent the song in the text; to be followed by "Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad!"—by "Phillis the Queen of the Fair"—after which, by the songs, "Come let me take thee to my breast"—and "Meet me on the Warlock Knowe,"—yet all the while performing his daily Excise routine thoroughly. What a month of August indeed! A fitting prelude to "Bruce's March to Bannockburn" with which he opened September.

But what of the song in the text? Through some cause or other, it never became popular; and yet Burns was much pleased with it. "Bravo! say I, it is a good song." Such were his words to Thomson in communicating it. When did our poet ever excel its closing verse? It will be perceived that in the middle portion of the song, commencing with the last line of stanza first, it is not the poet who speaks; but the "lover" whom he overheard.]

WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

Chorus.—O WHISTLE an' I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle an' I'll come to you, my lad,
Tho' father an' mother an' a' should gae mad,
O whistle an' I'll come to ye, my lad.[1]

But warily *tent* when ye come to court me, take care
And come nae unless the back-*yett* be *a-jee*; gate ajar
Syne up the back-style, and let naebody see, then
And come as ye were na comin to me,
And come as ye were na comin to me.
O whistle and I'll come, &c.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd na' a flie;
But steal me a *blink* o' your bonie black e'e, glance
Yet look as ye were na lookin to me,
Yet look as ye were na lookin to me.
O whistle an' I'll come, &c.

Ay vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whyles ye may lightly my beauty a-wee;*
But court na anither tho' jokin ye be,
For fear that she *wyle* your fancy frae me, beguile
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
O whistle an' I'll come, &c.

[A skeleton-sketch of this unique song was provided by Burns for Johnson's second vol. in the winter of 1787–88; which was not printed in its place, because it is all included in the present version. In sending it to Thomson (August 1793) he thus wrote:

* And sometimes affect to make light of my beauty a little.—J. H.

—"Yesterday I set the following verses to this air, which I much admire. Urbani, whom I met with here, begged them of me, as he also admired the air; but as I understand he looks with an evil eye on your Work, I did not choose to comply."

That this song was inspired by the charms of Jean Lorimer (late "Mrs. Whelpdale") cannot admit of a doubt.

The only variations are in the chorus, thus:—

[1 O whistle and I'll come to ye, my jo,
O whistle and I'll come to ye, my jo,
Tho' father and mother an' a' should say no,
Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my jo.]

PHILLIS THE QUEEN O' THE FAIR.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

Another favorite air of mine is "The muckin o' Geordie's Byre." When sung slow with expression, I wish that it had better poetry. That I have endeavored to supply as follows:—

ADOWN winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring;
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

Chorus.—Awa' wi' your Belles and your Beauties,
They never wi' her can compare,
Whaever hae met wi' my Phillis,
Has met wi' the queen o' the Fair.

The Daisy amus'd my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild;
Thou emblem, said I, o' my Phillis—
For she is Simplicity's child.
Awa' wi' your Belles, &c.

The Rose-bud's the blush o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest·
How fair and how pure is the Lily!
But fairer and purer her breast.
Awa' wi' your Belles, &c.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbor,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie:
Her breath is the breath of the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond her eye.
Awa' wi' your Belles, &c.

Her voice is the song o' the morning,
That wakes thro' the green-spreading grove,
When Phebus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.
Awa' wi' your Belles, &c.

But, Beauty, how frail and how fleeting!
The bloom of a fine summer's day;
While Worth in the mind o' my Phillis,
Will flourish without a decay.
Awa' wi' your Belles, &c.

[The reader will understand that Miss Philadelphia M'Murdo was the subject of this elegant song, produced to gratify Mr. Stephen Clarke the musician, who at this time would be a widower; for at his death on 6th August 1797, his son, William Clarke was appointed his successor, as organist of the Episcopal Chapel in the Cowgate of Edinburgh, and he also harmonized the airs in the sixth volume of the *Museum*. William Clarke died in 1820.

The following additional stanza is in the original MS. introduced as verse third, but scored out as superfluous, or not equal in quality to the others:—

"The Primrose is o'er for the season,
But mark where the Violet is blown;
How modest it peeps from the covert,
So Modesty sure is her own."]

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE TO MY BREAST.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

That tune, "Cauld Kail" is such a favorite of yours that I once more roved out yester evening for a gloamin-shot* at the Muses: when the Muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather, my old inspiring, dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the following:—

COME, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn, as vilest dust,
The world's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone,
That I may live to love her.

Thus, in my arms, wi' a' her charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' Heav'n to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And by thy e'en sae bonie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never.

[The reader will find, on looking to page 24, Vol. I., that the closing eight lines form part of one of the poet's earliest productions—the song called "Peggy Alison." In his letter of 28th August 1793, Burns admits that fact to Thomson in these words: "The last stanza of this song I send you, is the very words that Coila taught me many years ago; so I more than suspect she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits."

* Gloamin—twilight. A beautiful Saxon word which ought to be adopted in England. A "gloamin-shot," a twilight interview with.—*Currie.*

The real inspirer of the revived song, with additions, was Jean Lorimer. Thomson would not gratify the poet by setting the former song which Burns had penned in her celebration, to the tune of "Cauld Kail." He arranged that song to the air "I had a horse;" and as the poet had vowed to have a song to "Cauld Kail" dedicated to Jean Lorimer, he produced the one in the text. Thomson thwarted the bard again, by setting these verses to the far inferior Irish air, "Alley Croker;" but Burns did not live to be made aware of that instance of his correspondent's perversity.

Some of our readers may be disposed to conjecture that Mrs. Burns was the "Jeanie" of this song, as well as of "Poortith cauld," and of "Whistle and I'll come to you;" but the references to the blue eyes of the charmer, prove that he did not in these effusions sing of his black-eyed spouse.

"Her een sae bonie blue betray
How she repays my passion."]

DAINTY DAVIE.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

NOW rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
And now comes in the happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

Chorus.—Meet me on the warlock knowe,*
Dainty Davie, Dainty Davie;
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear Dainty Davie.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A wandering wi' my Davie.
Meet me on, &c.

* A warlock is a male witch. A warlock knowe is a knoll or height haunted by such beings.—J. H.

As purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro' the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithfu' Davie.
Meet me on, &c.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' Nature's rest,
I flee to his arms I loe the best,
And that's my ain dear Davie.

ROBERT BRUCE'S MARCH TO BANNOCKBURN.

To its ain Tune.

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

"Independently of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with anything in history which interests my feelings as a man, equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe, to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring and greatly-injured people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country or perish with her. Liberty! thou art a prize truly and indeed invaluable, for never canst thou be too dearly bought!"—*Burns to Lord Buchan, 12th Jan.* 1794.

Scots, wha hae wi' WALLACE bled,
Scots, wham BRUCE has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to Victorie!
Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud EDWARD'S power—
Chains and Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a Slave?
Let him turn and flee!
Wha, for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
FREE-MAN stand, or FREE-MAN fa',
Let him on wi' me![1]

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your Sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they *shall* be free!
Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
LIBERTY'S in every blow!—
Let us Do—or Die!!!

So may God ever defend the cause of Truth and Liberty, as He did that day! Amen!—*R. B.*

This appears to have been posted to Thomson on 1st Sep. 1793. (See Thomson Correspondence.)

The above version is from a copy of the original Ode now in the possession of Lord Dalhousie. Suffice it to say, that with exception of the first copy of the Ode now in possession of Lord Dalhousie, from which our text is printed, there is not in the world a single transcript of this *Address*, in the author's holograph as originally composed, and now world-approved. Many copies of the Ode in the Bard's handwriting still exist; but with this exception, and that to be immediately stated, they are all of the Thomson-breed, murdered through every fourth line being sprawled out to fit the paltry tune, "Lewie Gordon." We have only one variation to record, viz., in the closing line of the second double-stanza—[1] "Let him follow me," instead of as in the text, *on wi' me*—the latter a great improvement afterwards hit on in course of revisal.

We have now to introduce to our readers' notice a still rarer relic. Frederick Locker, Esq., author of "London Lyrics," &c., is in possession of our poet's first draft of this famous ode, undoubtedly

penned on 31st August 1793, immediately after the "evening walk" above referred to. As might be expected, that MS. shews several readings which he was enabled marvellously to improve after enjoying the refreshment of balmy sleep—Nature's "sweet restorer." Mr. Locker, after a keen competition, purchased this interesting relic at the Pickering sale of Burns's manuscripts in 1861. The following is a verbatim copy of the heroic effusion from that gentleman's MS. :—

ROBERT BRUCE'S MARCH TO BANNOCK-BURN.

Tune—"Hey, tutti taitie."

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to Victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour,
See approach proud Edward's power;
Sharply maun we bide the stoure—
Either they, or we.

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flie!

Wha for Scotland's King, and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',
Let him follow me!

Do you hear your children cry—
"Were we born in chains to lie?"
No! Come Death, or Liberty!
Yes, they shall be free!

Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us Do—or Die!!!

For variations see The Burns and Thomson Correspondence, page 225, Vol. V. Also see music, same page.

BEHOLD THE HOUR, THE BOAT ARRIVE.

Version Second.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

BEHOLD the hour, the boat arrive;
Thou goest, the darling of my heart;
Sever'd from thee, can I survive,
But Fate has will'd and we must part.
I'll often greet the surging swell,
Yon distant Isle will often hail:
"E'en here I took the last farewell;
There, latest mark'd her vanish'd sail."

Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye:
"Happy, thou Indian grove," I'll say,
"Where now my Nancy's path may be!
While thro' thy sweets she loves to stray,
O tell me, does she muse on me!"

[This is a somewhat altered version of the song (given at p. 93, Vol. III.,) which the poet enclosed to Clarinda on 27th December 1791. He forwarded it to Thomson before the close of September 1793, with these observations:—"The following song I have composed for *Oran Gaoil*, the Highland air that you tell me in your last you have resolved to give a place in your Book."

DOWN THE BURN, DAVIE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

As down the burn they took their way,
And thro' the flowery dale;
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was ay the tale:
With "Mary when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew?"
Quoth Mary—"Love, I like the burn,
And ay shall follow you."

[This was forwarded to Thomson in September 1793, as a closing double stanza to supersede some rather indelicate verses of a well-known old song by Robert Crawford. The lines in the text appeared in Thomson's third volume, 1802, in connection with Crawford's song; but Burns's alteration was subsequently withdrawn to make way for two very puerile double stanzas by Thomson himself, who considered that our bard "did not bring the song to the desirable conclusion *here* given to it."

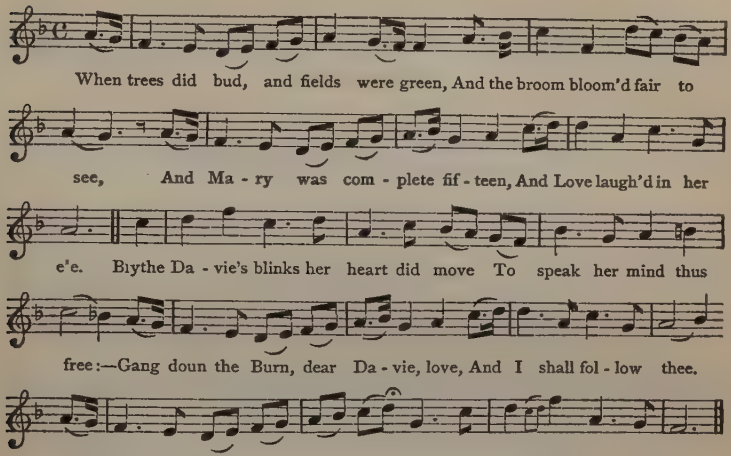
For the delectation of the reader, we append Thomson's *improvement* on Burns.

"As down the burn they took their way, he told his tender tale,
Where all the opening sweets of May adorn'd the flowery dale.
'Not May in all her maiden pride is half sae sweet as thee;
O say thou'lt be my ain dear bride? thou'rt a' the warld to me!'

'Tho' Sandy ca's me sweet and fair, and boasts his sheep and kine;
In vain he seeks me late and air, my heart is only thine!'
'Oh! rapturous sounds! my first, best Love, come take my plighted hand;
My faith and troth I'll fondly prove, in Wedlock's holy band.'"

But when we examine the music published by Thomson to these words as the venerable old air, "Down the Burn, Davie," which popular tradition had assigned to David Rizzio, we find he has *botched* the tune so that none can recognize it. The old-fashioned people about Edinburgh point out the very "Burn" in a sequestered dell near "Little France," in the vicinity of Craigmillar Castle, as that which Queen Mary directed her "Davie-love" to go down and she would follow.

We present the old air with a little modification to improve the flow of the melody.


When trees did bud, and fields were green, And the broom bloom'd fair to
see, And Ma - ry was com - plete fif - teen, And Love laugh'd in her
e'e. Blythe Da - vie's blinks her heart did move To speak her mind thus
free:—Gang doun the Burn, dear Da - vie, love, And I shall fol - low thee.
Gang doun the Burn, dear Da - vie, love, And I shall fol - low thee.

Now Davie did each lad surpass that dwelt on yon burnside,
And Mary was the sweetest lass, just meet to be a bride,
At gloamin-tide their hearts were glad, as Mary sang wi' glee:—
Gang doun the Burn, dear Davie, love, and I shall follow thee,
Gang doun the Burn, dear Davie, love, and I shall follow thee.

As doun the Burn they took their way, and thro' the flowery dale,
His cheek to hers he aft did lay, and love was ay the tale;
Sweet Mary, fond as turtle-dove, thus whisper'd bonilie:—
Gang whar ye like, dear Davie, love, I ay shall follow thee,
Gang whar ye like, dear Davie, love, I ay shall follow thee.]

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER, JAMIE.

Tune—"Fee him, father, fee him."

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

THOU hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever;
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever;

Aften hast thou vow'd that Death
Only should us sever;
Now thou'st left thy lass for ay—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never.

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken;
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken;
Thou canst love another *jo*, sweetheart
While my heart is breaking;
Soon my weary e'en I'll close,
Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Never mair to waken!

[This song was forwarded to Thomson in September 1793, with these observations:—"I enclose you Fraser's set of this tune. When he plays it slow, in fact he makes it the language of despair.* I shall here give you two stanzas in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which 'Patie Allan's mother died—*that was about the back o' midnight*,' and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company except the *hautbois* and the Muse."

Chambers has rather a strange note to this song. He says "It is surprising that Burns should have thought it necessary to substitute new verses for the old song to this air, which is one of the most exquisite effusions of genuine natural sentiment in the whole range of Scottish lyrical poetry. Its merit is now fully appreciated, while Burns's substitute song is scarcely ever sung." We fully admit the merits of "Fee him, father, fee him," with its strange mixture of the comic and the pathetic; but we appreciate Burns's tender lines, as more fully expressing the despairing wail of the melody

* "I well recollect, about the year 1824, hearing Fraser play the air on his benefit night, in the Edinburgh Theatre, 'in the manner in which he had played it to Burns.' It was listened to with breathless attention, as if the house had felt it to be a medium of communion with the spirit of the departed bard." —*Chambers*, 1852.

when played as Burns describes. John Wilson used to sing Burns's words with the most thrilling effect.

Another example of the perversity of George Thomson's nature is displayed in connection with this song. He discarded the melody attached to it by Burns, and adopted instead of it a mongrel air known as "My boy, Tammy;" but in order to achieve this, he had to alter the words of the text thus:—

"Thou hast left me ever, Tam,
Thou hast me forsaken, Tam,
Never mair to waken, Tam," &c.]

WHERE ARE THE JOYS I HAE MET?

Tune—"Saw ye my father."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

Where are the joys I hae met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early sang?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
At e'ening the wild-woods amang?

Nae mair a winding the course o' yon river,
And marking sweet flowrets sae fair,
Nae mair I trace the light footsteps o' Pleasure,
But Sorrow and sad-sighing care.

Is it that Summer's forsaken our vallies,
And grim, surly Winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses
Proclaim it the pride o' the year.

Fain wad I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet lang, lang, too well hae I known;
A' that has caused the wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Not Hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamor'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

[The "Jenny" of this song is simply the artist's favorite model, placed with her face in shadow. The words of the old ballad, "Saw ye my father," are very poetical, although the subject is somewhat objectionable; and accordingly these verses of Burns have not had the effect of banishing from "Love's shining circle," the "Bonie Grey Cock"—another title by which the ballad is known. The melody is very exquisite.]

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE.

Tune—"The Collier's Dochter."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DELUDED swain, the pleasure
The fickle Fair can give thee,
Is but a fairy treasure,
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee:
The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The cloud's uncertain motion,
They are but types of Woman.

O art thou not asham'd
To doat upon a feature?
If Man thou wouldst be nam'd,
Despise the silly creature.
Go, find an honest fellow,
Good claret set before thee,
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory!

[This clever Bacchanal, furnished to Thomson in September 1793, is merely an improvement on an old English song. Burns seems

to have had an extensive library of old-fashioned collections of songs; from which he supplied or suggested to Thomson English words to fit his Scots melodies.]

THINE AM I, MY FAITHFUL FAIR.

Tune—"The Quaker's Wife."

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

THINE am I, my faithful Fair,
Thine my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.
To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish;
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away those rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure;
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure!
What is life when wanting Love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

[There is not the slightest evidence that this very successful love-song was composed prior to October 1793, when the poet sent it to Thomson as English words, to follow his other song to the same air, "Blythe hae I been on yon hill." The name "Nancy" suggests that recollections of "Clarinda" may have prompted the song. We incline to believe with Mr. M'Lehose, grandson of Clarinda, and author of the Clarinda correspondence, and with Robert Chambers, that Clarinda was in the poet's mind when he composed the above song. In August 1795, Burns proposed to

Thomson some alterations upon the song in the text with a view to give Jean Lorimer the benefit of it, thus :—

"Thine am I, my Chloris fair, well thou may'st discover;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins tells the ardent lover.

If you neglect the alteration, I call on all the Nine, conjunctly and severally, to anathematise you!"]

ON MRS. RIDDELL'S BIRTHDAY,

4TH NOVEMBER 1793.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

OLD WINTER, with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferred:
"What have I done of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?
My cheerless suns no pleasure know;
Night's horrid car drags dreary slow;
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English hanging, drowning.

"Now Jove, for once be mighty civil,
To counterbalance all this evil;
Give me, and I've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day!
That brilliant gift shall so enrich me,
Spring, Summer, Autumn, cannot match me."
"'Tis done!" says Jove; so ends my story,
And Winter once rejoiced in glory.

[The poet's intimacy with this very sprightly and fascinating correspondent had now reached its climax. Her husband as we learn from one of Burns's letters to Thomson (July 1793) had been absent almost all summer in the West Indies, looking after his affairs there. He returned before the close of the year, and some disturbance occurred in his house at Christmas, which caused a quarrel between Burns and the Riddell family, that was never thoroughly cemented into friendship again.]

MY SPOUSE NANCY.

Tune—"My Jo Janet."

(GEO. THOMSON'S COLL., 1799.)

"HUSBAND, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, Sir;
Tho' I am your wedded wife
Yet I am not your slave, Sir."
"One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy;
Is it Man or Woman, say,
My spouse Nancy?"

"If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sov'reign lord,
And so, good bye, allegiance!"
"Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy;
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse Nancy."

"My poor heart then break it must,
My last hour I am near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think how you will bear it.'
"I will hope and trust in heaven,
Nancy, Nancy;
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse Nancy."

"Well, Sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to *daunt* you; scare
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid sprites shall haunt you!"

"I'll wed another like my dear
Nancy, Nancy;
Then all hell will fly for fear,
My spouse, Nancy."

[This witty dramatic song has been very popular from the day it was first given to the public. It was forwarded to Thomson in December 1793. The poet's working sketches of some of the stanzas are in the British Museum, where the second verse is thus varied:—

'If the word is still obey!
Always love and fear you;
I will take myself away,
And never more come near you,'
Sad will I be, &c.

The closing stanza thus begins—

'Well, ev'n from the silent dead,
Sir, I'll try to daunt you,' &c.

The biographer of William Hutton of Birmingham narrates that in 1811 at a watering-place in the North Riding of Yorkshire, that good-natured philosopher amused and delighted a large and fashionable company, when he was eighty-eight years old, by singing the husband's part of "My Spouse, Nancy," while his daughter performed the wife's part. John Wilson the Scottish vocalist used to sing this song with great effect at his concerts.]

ADDRESS,

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT, DECEMBER 4TH, 1793, AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

STILL anxious to secure your partial favor,
And not less anxious, sure, this night than ever,
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better;
So sought a poet, roosted near the skies,
Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;

Said, nothing like his works was ever printed;
And last, my prologue business slyly hinted.
"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes,
"I know your bent—these are no laughing times:
Can you—but, Miss, I own I have my fears—
Dissolve in pause, and sentimental tears;
With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence,
Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell repentance;
Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand,
Waving on high the desolating brand,
Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land?"

I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,
D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying?
I'll laugh, that's poz—nay more, the world shall know it;
And so, your servant! gloomy Master Poet!
Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,
That Misery's another word for Grief:
I also think—so may I be a bride!
That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye;
Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
To make three guineas do the work of five:
Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch!
Say you'll be merry, tho' you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove;
Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
Measur'st in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—
Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,
Peerest to meditate the healing leap:

Would'st thou be cur'd, thou silly, moping elf?
Laugh at her follies—laugh e'en at thyself:
Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
And love a kinder—that's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;
And as we're merry, may we still be wise.

[This second Address written by the Bard for his favorite actress, Miss Fontenelle, has been preserved to the public through the accident of its having been communicated in a letter from Burns to Mrs. Dunlop. Dr. Currie dated that letter, "15th Dec. 1795;" but from internal evidence it is proved to have been penned not later than 1793.

There cannot now be a possibility of doubt that Mrs. Dunlop, who was so proud of having the Wallace blood in her veins, comported herself towards Burns during the two latter years of his existence like the rest of his fair-weather friends, and that her relative Dr. Currie took the utmost pains, and resorted to a few mean shifts, to submerge that fact. No dependence whatever can be placed on the dates he gives to Burns's letters addressed to Mrs. Dunlop in his later years; for these have been purposely disarranged and misdated, in order to carry out the fraudulent coverture so necessary to preserve his friend's integrity as a life-long patron of Burns.]

COMPLIMENTARY EPIGRAM ON MARIA RIDDELL.

(Douglas, 1877.)

"Praise Woman still," his lordship roars,
"Deserv'd or not, no matter!"
But thee whom all my soul adores,
Ev'n Flattery cannot flatter:
Maria, all my thought and dream,
Inspires my vocal shell;
The more I praise my lovely theme,
The more the truth I tell.

[This trifle, a copy of which is inscribed on the back of the poet's first draft of "Scots wha hae," &c., was bought by Mr. Fred. Locker, London, at the sale of Burns's manuscripts which belonged to the late Mr. Pickering. An indorsation explains that some one, in presence of Mrs. Riddell, informed the poet that Lord Buchan, in an argument, vociferated that "Women must be always flattered grossly, or not praised at all." Whereupon Burns pencilled these lines on a slip of paper which he handed to the lady. We suspect that our poet was here only establishing, instead of seeking to rebut, his lordship's argument.]

REMORSEFUL APOLOGY.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

THE friend whom, wild from Wisdom's way,
The fumes of wine infuriate send,
(Not moony madness more astray)
Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Mine was th' insensate frenzied part,
Ah! why should I such scenes outlive?
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!—
'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

[It is not very certain to whom these lines were addressed. The manuscript from which Dr. Currie printed the lines, is now in the British Museum, and there is a docquet on it, apparently in Currie's hand, stating that it was addressed to a Mr. M'Kenzie whom the bard had offended. There can be little question but that the lines were addressed to Mrs. Riddell.]

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE?

Tune—"The Sutor's Dochter."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

WILT thou be my Dearie
When Sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
O wilt thou let me cheer thee!
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee:
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my Dearie!
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my Dearie!

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or, if thou wilt na be my ain,
O say na thou'lt refuse me!
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Still trusting that thou lo'es me!
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Still trusting that thou lo'es me!

[This is one of the most remarkable of all Burns's lyrics, and one in which he specially prided himself. We cannot resist coming to the conclusion that Maria Riddell was its intended heroine. The first mention we have of it is in the poet's letter to Alexander Cunningham, dated 3rd March 1794, thus:—"*Apropos*, do you know the much admired Highland air, called 'The Sutor's Dochter?' It is a first-rate favorite of mine, and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it. I will send it to you as it was sung, with great applause in some fashionable circles, by Major Robertson of Lude, who was here with his corps."

The correspondence of the poet, prior to the close of 1793, contains repeated reference to the "lobster-coated puppies" who associated with Mrs. Riddell at that period; and the lady's grand-

son, Mr. Arthur de Noe Walker, of 10 Ovington Gardens, London, has now in his possession the poet's holograph copy of this song which he presented to Mrs. Riddell, along with the one given at page 162, *supra*, "The last time I came o'er the muir."]

A FIDDLER IN THE NORTH.

Tune—"The King o' France he rade a race."

(CROMEK, 1808.)

AMANG the trees, where humming bees,
At buds and flowers were hinging, O,
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
And to her *pipe* was singing, O: bagpipe
'Twas Pibroch, Sang, Strathspeys and Reels,
She *dirl'd* them aff fu' clearly, O; played
When there cam' a yell o' foreign squeels,
That *dang* her *tapsalteerie*, O. knocked skyhigh

Their capon craws an' queer "ha, ha's,"
They made our *lugs* grow *eerie*, O; ears dismal
The hungry *bike* did scrape and *fyke*, swarm gesture
Till we were wae and weary, O:
But a royal ghaist, wha ance was cas'd,
A prisoner, aughteen year awa,
He fir'd a Fiddler in the North,
That dang them tapsalteerie, O.

[It appears probable from the terms of one of the poet's letters to Johnson (forming part of the Hastie Collection of Burns MSS. in the British Museum), that Neil Gow paid a visit to Dumfries about this period, and had several meetings with Burns; and it seems reasonable to infer that the present production was one of the results of those interviews. The poet thus wrote to his correspondent:—"I was much obliged to you for making me acquainted with Gow. He is a modest, intelligent, worthy fellow, besides his being a man of genius in his way. I have spent many happy hours with him in the short while he has been here." The "royal

ghaist" referred to is King James I. of Scotland, who was kept a prisoner in England for eighteen years.

It is at the same time not unlikely that the "Gow" thus referred to was not the famous "Neil," but a brother of his, who played the violoncello to the tenor of the distinguished "Fiddler in the North." Burns was introduced to Neil Gow during his Highland Tour in 1787, so that the words above quoted could scarcely be applicable to him.

The original MS. of this song is now in possession of Henry Probasco, Esq., of Cincinnati, Ohio.]

A RED, RED ROSE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

My Luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
My Luve is like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my Dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luve thee still, my Dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare-thee-well, my only Luve!
And fare-thee-well, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile!

[This little Love-chant has been a universal favorite since it was first given to the world. It is one of those lyrics, in imitation of the old minstrels, which called forth the commendations of Hazlitt in his critical remarks on Burns's poetry. The lines and

sentiments are so exceeding simple that any reader, on seeing them for the first time, naturally imagines that he has seen or heard them before; but no one editor or annotator of Burns has been able to shew that they ever were in print before their appearance in the *Museum* with Burns's name attached.]

RESISTLESS KING OF LOVE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

YOUNG JAMIE, pride of a' the plain,
Sae gallant and sae gay a swain,
Thro' a' our lasses he did rove,
And reign'd resistless King of Love.

But now, wi' sighs and starting tears,
He strays amang the woods and breers;
Or in the glens and rocky caves,
His sad complaining *dowie* raves:— dolefully

"I wha sae late did range and rove,
And chang'd with every moon my love,
I little thought the time was near,
Repentance I should buy sae dear.

"The slighted maids my torments see,
And laugh at a' the pangs I *dree;* endure
While she, my cruel, scornful Fair,
Forbids me e'er to see her mair."

[The original MS. of this song, supplied to Johnson, is in the Hastie Collection at the British Museum. Stenhouse regards it as an unclaimed production of Burns, an opinion to which we have nothing to say in dissent. An examination of the words at once suggests that it may have been one of those pastorals which the poet composed at this period with a view to conciliate the temper, and melt the coldness of Maria Riddell, whose lyrical tastes were very Arcadian. After the quarrel between that pair of Platonic lovers, which we have referred to at p. 192, *supra*, the prose corre-

spondence betwixt them plainly exhibits a kind of diplomatic coquettishness, whose issue might be either reconciliation or open rupture. Unfortunately, the policy of Mrs. Riddell led her to overstretch the *haut-en-bas-rigour* by which she meant to depress and discipline her offending lover; and that roused the "stubborn something in his bosom" which impelled him to adopt the position of an injured man, in whom meekness would be pusillanimity, and revenge the noblest of virtues.

The foregoing verses are adapted in the *Museum* to a plaintive and well-known air called "The Carlin o' the Glen."]

THE FLOWERY BANKS OF CREE.

(Geo. Thomson's Coll., 1798.)

Here is the glen, and here the bower,
All underneath the birchen shade;
The village-bell has told the hour,
O what can stay my lovely maid?

'Tis not Maria's whispering call;
'Tis but the balmy-breathing gale,
Mixt with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear;
So calls the woodlark in the grove,
His little, faithful mate to cheer;
At once 'tis music and 'tis love.

And art thou come! and art thou true!
O welcome dear to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew,
Along the flowery banks of Cree.

[This song appears to have been composed with the same purpose as that immediately preceding. The poet forwarded it to Thomson in April 1794, with directions to set it to an air called "The Banks of Cree," composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron of Heron. He had

sent Thomson no verses since the month of December preceding, and now he wrote, "For six or seven months I shall be quite in song, as you shall see by and by."

Meanwhile the original breach between Burns and his intimate friends at Woodley Park became wide, in spite of all his efforts at reconciliation. The poet became at length so deeply incensed against the once admired Maria and her husband that he stooped to express his rancor in strains truly unworthy of him; and these we must now proceed to give.]

MONODY

ON A LADY FAMED FOR HER CAPRICE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

"Tell me what you think of the following Monody. The subject of it is a woman of fashion in this country, with whom at one period I was well acquainted. By some scandalous conduct to me, and two or three other gentlemen here as well as me, she steered so far to the north of my good opinion, that I have made her the theme of some ill-natured things. The epigram appended struck me the other day as I passed her carriage."—*Burns to Mrs. M'Lehose*, 1794.

How cold is that bosom which folly once fired,
How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glisten'd;
How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tired,
How dull is that ear which to flattery so listen'd!

If sorrow and anguish *their* exit await,
From friendship and dearest affection remov'd;
How doubly severer, Maria, thy fate,
Thou diedst unwept, as thou livedst unlov'd.

Loves, Graces, and Virtues, I call not on you;
So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a tear:
But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,
And flowers let us cull for Maria's cold bier.

We'll search through the garden for each silly flower,
We'll roam thro' the forest for each idle weed;
But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,
For none e'er approach'd her but rued the rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay;
Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre;*
There keen Indignation shall dart on his prey,
Which spurning Contempt shall redeem from his ire.

THE EPITAPH.

Here lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
What once was a butterfly, gay in life's beam:
Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
Want only of goodness denied her esteem.

PINNED TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL'S CARRIAGE.

(Cunningham, 1834.)

If you rattle along like your Mistress's tongue,
Your speed will outrival the dart;
But a fly for your load, you'll break down on the road,
If your stuff be as rotten's her heart.

EPITAPH FOR MR. WALTER RIDDELL.

(Stewart, 1801.)

Sic a reptile was Wat, sic a miscreant slave,
That the worms ev'n d—d him when laid in his grave;
'In his flesh there's a famine,' a starved reptile cries,
'And his heart is rank poison!' another replies.

* *N.B.*—The lady affects to be a poetess.—*R. B.*

[The foregoing productions, all very characteristic of their author, must be left to speak for themselves. Chambers truly remarks that "to have given expression to such sentiments regarding a female, even though a positive wrong had been inflicted, would have been totally indefensible; and still more astounding is it to find, that the bard could think of exhibiting such effusions to another female."]

EPISTLE FROM ESOPUS TO MARIA.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

"Well! divines may say of it what they please; but *execration* is to the mind what phlebotomy is to the body; the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations."—*Letter to Peter Hill.*

FROM those drear solitudes and frowsy cells,
Where Infamy with sad Repentance dwells;*
Where turnkeys make the jealous portal fast,
And deal from iron hands the spare repast;
Where truant 'prentices, yet young in sin,
Blush at the curious stranger peeping in;
Where strumpets, relics of the drunken roar,
Resolve to drink, nay half—to whore no more;
Where tiny thieves not destin'd yet to swing,
Beat hemp for others, riper for the string:
From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date,
To tell Maria her Esopus' fate.

"Alas! I feel I am no actor here!" †
'Tis real hangmen real scourges bear!
Prepare, Maria, for a horrid tale
Will turn thy very rouge to deadly pale;

---

* In these dread solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells, &c.
POPE'S *"Eloisa to Abelard."*

† Quoted from Lyttelton's Prologue to the *Coriolanus* of Thomson.

Will make thy hair, tho' erst from gipsy poll'd,
By barber woven, and by barber sold,
Though twisted smooth with Harry's nicest care,
Like hoary bristles to erect and stare.
The hero of the mimic scene, no more
I start in Hamlet, in Othello roar;
Or, haughty Chieftain, 'mid the din of arms,
In Highland bonnet, woo Malvina's charms;
While sans-culottes stoop up the mountain high,
And steal from me Maria's prying eye.
Blest Highland bonnet! once my proudest dress,
Now prouder still, Maria's temples press;
I see her wave thy towering plumes afar,
And call each coxcomb to the wordy war:
I see her face the first of Ireland's sons,*
And even out-Irish his Hibernian bronze;
The crafty Colonel leaves the tartan'd lines,†
For other wars, where he a hero shines:
The hopeful youth, in Scottish senate bred,
Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head,‡
Comes 'mid a string of coxcombs, to display
That *veni*, *vidi*, *vici*, is his way:
The shrinking Bard adown the alley skulks,
And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks;
Though there, his heresies in Church and State
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate:
Still she undaunted reels and rattles on,
And dares the public like a noontide sun.

---

* The poet here enumerates several of Mr. Riddell's friends whom he used to meet at Woodley Park, most of those connected with the army. The distinguished Irishman here referred to was named Gillespie.

† Colonel M'Dowal of Logan, noted as the Lothario of his County during many years.

‡ A son of John Bushby of Tinwald Downs, a wealthy writer, and banker, in Dumfries, with whom Burns had been very intimate. The son, Mr. Maitland Bushby, was then a young advocate, much inferior to his father in intellect. (John Bushby was a native of Cumberland, and came, a very poor young man, to Dumfries. By tact and ability he rose to become the agent of many of the county proprietors, as well as the leading lawyer and banker of the Burgh. Many unsavory stories regarding his unscrupulous ways of making money were floating about Dumfries in the earlier decades of the century.—J. H.)

What scandal called Maria's jaunty stagger
The ricket reeling of a crooked swagger?
Whose spleen (e'en worse than Burns's venom, when
He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,
And pours his vengeance in the burning line,)—
Who christen'd thus Maria's lyre-divine
The idiot strum of Vanity bemus'd,
And even th' abuse of Poesy abus'd?—
Who called her verse a Parish Workhouse, made
For motley foundling Fancies, stolen or strayed?

A Workhouse! ah, that sound awakes my woes,
And pillows on the thorn my rack'd repose!
In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
And all my frowsy couch in sorrow steep;
That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
And vermin'd gipsies litter'd heretofore.

Why, Lonsdale, thus thy wrath on vagrants pour?
Must earth no rascal save thyself endure?
Must thou alone in guilt immortal swell,
And make a vast monopoly of hell?
Thou know'st the Virtues cannot hate thee worse;
The Vices also, must they club their curse?
Or must no tiny sin to others fall,
Because thy guilt's supreme enough for all?

Maria, send me too thy griefs and cares;
In all of thee sure thy Esopus shares.
As thou at all mankind the flag unfurls,
Who on my fair one Satire's vengeance hurls—
Who calls thee, pert, affected, vain coquette,
A wit in folly, and a fool in wit!
Who says that fool alone is not thy due,
And quotes thy treacheries to prove it true!

Our force united on thy foes we'll turn,
And dare the war with all of woman born:
For who can write and speak as thou and I?
My periods that decyphering defy,
And thy still matchless tongue that conquers all reply!

[The peculiar plan of this final poetical attack on the Maria whom its author had so recently worshipped, was explained in a communication made by a well-informed correspondent of the *Kendal Mercury* in July 1852.

A dramatic company, headed by Mr. James Williamson, an actor of considerable merit, occasionally performed in the little theatre behind the George Inn of Dumfries. About the close of 1793, Williamson, like Burns, was frequently admitted into the charmed circle at Woodley Park. In the following Spring, after the fatal quarrel, the poet happened to hear of a most extraordinary adventure having befallen Williamson and his associates while performing at Whitehaven. The Earl of Lonsdale, a local despot whose ill-fame was not unknown to Burns, had committed the whole company to prison as vagrants. Seizing on this incident, Burns conceived the idea of the foregoing epistle (formed on the model of "Eloisa to Abelard") as being penned by Williamson under the name "Esopus," in prison at Whitehaven, to the lady whose society he had recently enjoyed.]

EPITAPH ON A NOTED COXCOMB,

CAPT. WM. RODDICK, OF CORBISTON.

(ALDINE ED., 1839.)

LIGHT lay the earth on Billy's breast,
His chicken heart so tender;
But build a castle on his head,
His *scull* will prop it under.

ON CAPT. LASCELLES.

(BRIGHT'S "GLENRIDDELL MSS.," 1874.)

WHEN Lascelles thought fit from this world to depart,
Some friends warmly thought of embalming his heart;
A bystander whispers—"Pray don't make so much o't,
The subject is poison, no reptile will touch it."

ON WM. GRAHAM, ESQ., OF MOSSKNOWE.

(CUNNINGHAM'S 8VO. ED., 1840.)

"STOP thief!" dame Nature call'd to death,
As Willy drew his latest breath;
How shall I make a fool again?
My choicest model thou has ta'en.

ON JOHN BUSHBY, ESQ., TINWALD DOWNS.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

Here lies John Bushby—*honest man*,
Cheat him, Devil—if you can!

[The preceding four Epigrams are among the list of those sent by Burns to Creech, in May 1795; and they are also recorded in the author's handwriting, in the Glenriddell volume of his poetry, now in the Liverpool Athenæum. After the death of Glenriddell in April 1794, the poet obtained the Book from the Riddell family by application for it; and the Epigrams—placed at the end of the volume, were evidently inserted after that period.

It seems very likely that the subjects of these lampoons were friends and associates of Mr. Walter Riddell, who thus came in for a share of the spleen and ill-nature which Burns so much indulged in on the occasion of his outcast with that lady.

There is a family likeness between the lines on Capt. Lascelles,

and the Epitaph on Mr. Walter Riddell, given at page 204. The opening line is nearly word for word the same as the first line of the following happy effusion by Prior :—

"When Bibo thought fit from this world to retreat,
As full of champagne as an egg's full of meat,
He waked in the boat and to Charon he said,
He would be row'd back, for he was not yet dead:
"Trim the boat and sit quiet!" stern Charon replied,
"You may have forgot you were drunk when you died."]

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RIDDELL,

OF GLENRIDDELL AND FRIARS' CARSE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

No more, ye warblers of the wood! no more;
Nor pour your descant grating on my soul;
Thou young-eyed Spring! gay in thy verdant stole,
More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar.

How can ye charm, ye flowers, with all your dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend!
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain flows round the untimely tomb where Riddell lies.

Yes, pour, ye warblers! pour the notes of woe,
And soothe the Virtues weeping o'er his bier:
The man of worth—and hath not left his peer!
Is in his "narrow house," for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring! again with joy shall others greet;
Me, memory of my loss will only meet.

[Somewhat unexpectedly, the Laird of Carse died on 21st April 1794, unreconciled to Burns, who remembering only his worth and former kindness, immediately conceived this elegiac sonnet.

Chambers informs us that the Sonnet was composed so early as to appear in the local newspaper beneath the announcement of Glenriddell's death. The merits of the composition are the greater that it was executed so promptly; and the recollection of this magnanimous act of Burns must have touched Maria Riddell's mind with some compunctious force, when she performed a kindred act, little more than two years thereafter, for their author, also laid in his last sleep.

So recently as 23rd January, 1794, the University of Edinburgh had conferred on Robert Riddell the degree of LL.D. Within a month after his death, James Johnson of Edinburgh advertised as "Now ready, Robert Riddell of Glenriddell's Collection of Scots, Galwegian and Border Tunes," and Burns, in a note to Johnson, dated 29th June 1794, thanks him for his "kind present of poor Riddell's Book."

Mr. Walter Riddell, who on 1st April 1794, had advertised Woodley Park for sale, inherited Friars' Carse after his brother's death; but, fast-living squire as he must have been, Friars' Carse also was advertised for sale in June following.]

THE LOVELY LASS O' INVERNESS.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

THE lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For, e'en to morn she cries "alas!"
And ay the *saut* tear *blin's* her e'e. salt blinds

"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day—
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

"Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growin green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's[1] e'e!

"Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee!"

[The kindly Spring wakened up the chords of song within the bosom of our Minstrel, and bestirring himself to produce lyrics for the pages of Johnson and Thomson, he was gradually diverted from the morbid desire to write lampoons and personal satire. In Oswald's "Caledonian Pocket Companion," he found a pretty enough melody bearing the title of the song in the text, and forthwith he produced these verses, which are generally thought to be amongst his most successful imitations of the style of the older minstrels. "Drumossie Muir" is merely another name for "Culloden Lea," where the closing battle of the Rebellion in 1745–46, was fought, with such disaster to the hopes of the Jacobites. On Thursday, 6th September 1787, according to an entry in the record of the poet's Highland Tour, he "came over Culloden Muir," and had "reflections on the field of battle." The reader may judge of these reflections by perusing the text.

The original MS. in the British Museum shews the important variation, [1]woman's e'e, for "lover's e'e" in Johnson.]

CHARLIE, HE'S MY DARLING.

(Johnson's Museum, 1796.)

'Twas on a Monday morning,
Right early in the year,
That Charlie came to our town,
The young Chevalier.

Chorus—An' Charlie, he's my darling,
My darling, my darling,
Charlie, he's my darling,
The young Chevalier.

As he was walking up the street,
The city for to view,
O there he spied a bonie lass
The window looking through,
An' Charlie, &c.

Sae light's he jumped up the stair,
And tirl'd at the pin ;*
And wha sae ready as hersel'
To let the laddie in !
An' Charlie, &c.

He set his Jennie on his knee,
All in his Highland dress ;
For *brawly* well he ken'd the way — perfectly
To please a bonie lass,
An' Charlie, &c.

It's up yon heathery mountain,
An' down yon *scroggie* glen, — brushy
We *daur na gang* a milking, — dare not go
For Charlie and his men,
An' Charlie, &c.

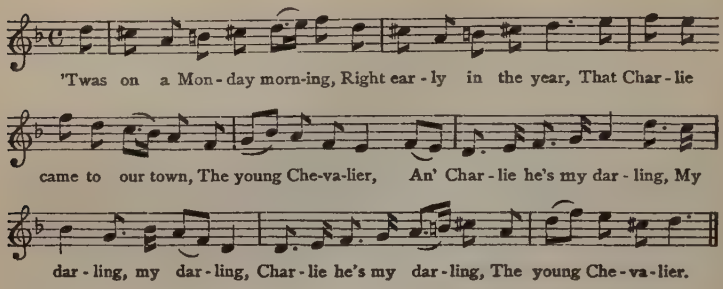
[This Jacobite effusion was never seen in print before its appearance in Johnson's fifth volume ; and as it was communicated by Burns, it is fairly presumed to be his own. It was a favorite of Sir Walter Scott, and it will be recollected that when in Italy, seeking to repair his hopelessly shattered frame, his mind would wander northwards to his native glens, as was made apparent by his frequent crooning of the closing verse of this song :—"It's up yon heathery mountain," &c.]

---

* A "risping-pin," fixed on the back of house doors, was a notched rod of iron, with loose ring attached; this made a loud ricketing noise, on being drawn up and down. The old ballad of the *Grey Cock*, thus refers to it :—

"So up Johnie rose, and to her door she goes,
And gently tirl'd at the pin."

The melody to which these words are sung was much improved in passing through the hands of Stephen Clarke, the musical editor of the *Museum*, and we consequently transfer it to our pages.]


'Twas on a Mon-day morn-ing, Right ear-ly in the year, That Char-lie
came to our town, The young Che-va-lier, An' Char-lie he's my dar-ling, My
dar-ling, my dar-ling, Char-lie he's my dar-ling, The young Che-va-lier.

BANNOCKS O' *BEAR* MEAL.* Barley

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

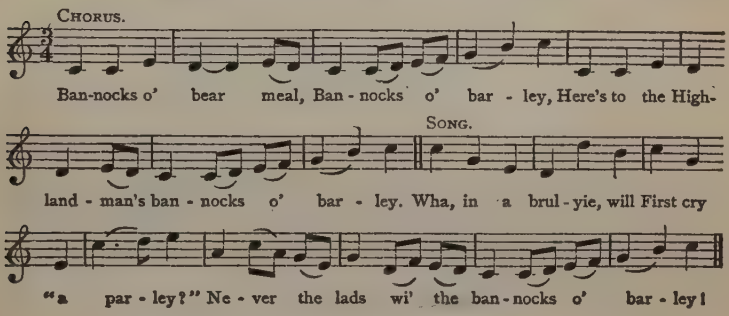
Chorus—Bannocks o' bear meal,
Bannocks o' barley,
Here's to the Highlandman's
Bannocks o' barley!

WHA, in a *brulyie*, will broil
First cry "a parley?"
Never the lads wi' the
Bannocks o' barley,
Bannocks o' bear meal, &c.

Wha, in his *wae* days, woe
Were loyal to Charlie?
Wha but the lads wi' the
Bannocks o' barley!
Bannocks o' bear meal, &c.

* The Highlanders carried bannocks or thick cakes of bear and barley meal as provender, when following "Charlie" in their unfortunate campaign of 1745 and 1746.—J. H.

[The above is entirely the production of Burns, who wrote it to supplant some very indifferent words to which the fine old tune was sung. A song called, "Cakes o' Crowdy," dating so far back as 1688, is still extant, and is said to have been a composition of Lord Newbattle, eldest son of the then Earl of Lothian. Another song, perhaps older, but very indecorous, commencing—"A lad and a lass lay in a Killogie," was sung to the same air. The melody is short and sweet, and we therefore annex it.]


Chorus.
Ban-nocks o' bear meal, Ban - nocks o' bar - ley, Here's to the High-
Song.
land - man's ban - nocks o' bar - ley. Wha, in a brul - yie, will First cry
"a par - ley?" Ne - ver the lads wi' the ban - nocks o' bar - ley!

THE HIGHLAND BALOU.

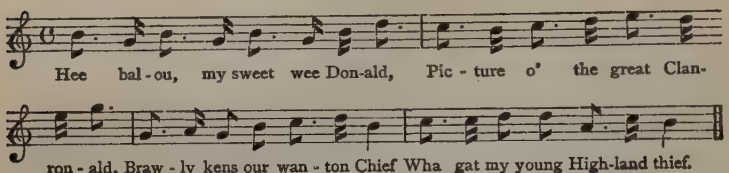
(Johnson's Museum, 1796.)

Hee balou, my sweet wee Donald, Ha! be soothed
Picture o' the great Clanronald;
Brawlie kens our wanton Chief full well
Wha gat my young Highland thief.

Leeze me on thy bonie *craigie*, save neck
An thou live, thou'll steal a *naigie*, horse
Travel the country thro' and thro',
And bring hame a Carlisle cow.

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the Border,
Weel, my babie, may thou *furder!* plunder
Harry the louns o' the laigh Countrie,
Syne to the Highlands hame to me.

[This rich picture of an embryo Highland Cateran displays the hand of Burns in every line, although his name is not attached to it in the *Museum*. Stenhouse informs us that the poet obtained the Gaelic words and music in course of his Highland Tour, and that the text is merely a translation into "laigh country" dialect.]


Hee bal - ou, my sweet wee Don-ald, Pic - ture o' the great Clan-
ron - ald, Braw - ly kens our wan - ton Chief Wha gat my young High-land thief.

THE HIGHLAND WIDOW'S LAMENT.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

OH I am come to the low Countrie,
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Without a penny in my purse,
To buy a meal to me.

It was na sae in the Highland hills,
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Nae woman in the Country wide,
Sae happy was as me.

For then I had a score o' *kye*, cows
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Feeding on yon hill sae high,
And giving milk to me.

And there I had three score o' *yowes*, ewes
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Skipping on yon bonie *knowes*, hills
And *casting woo* to me. yielding wool

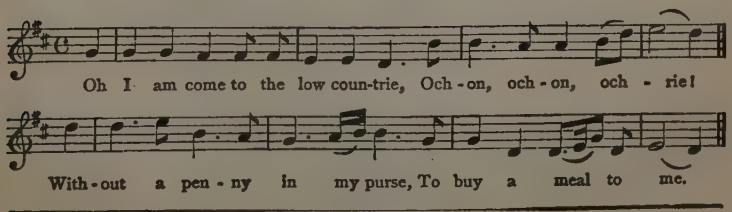
I was the happiest of a' the Clan,
Sair, sair may I repine;
For Donald was the *brawest* man, finest-looking
And Donald he was mine.

Till Charlie Stewart * cam at last,
Sae far to set us free;
My Donald's arm was wanted then,
For Scotland and for me.

Their waefu' fate what need I tell,
Right to the wrang did yield;
My Donald and his Country fell,
Upon Culloden field.

Ochon! O Donald, oh!
Ochon, Ochon, Ochrie!
Nae woman in the warld wide,
Sae wretched now as me.

[This pathetic ballad is altogether the work of Burns. The plaintive Gaelic air to which it is allied was obtained by him from a lady in the North. The battle of Culloden was fought on 16th April 1746, after which the Duke of Cumberland encamped at Fort Augustus, whence he sent off detachments to ravage the whole country round. The castles of Lovat, Glengary, and Lochiel were destroyed; the cottages were demolished or burnt to the ground, the cattle driven away, and the families of the hapless rebels, if spared from fire and sword, had to wander houseless and without food over the desolate heath. Such is the picture retrospectively glanced at in the ballad. We annex the air.]



* The Pretender.

IT WAS A' FOR OUR RIGHTFU' KING.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

It was a' for our rightfu' King
We left fair Scotland's strand;
It was a' for our rightfu' King
We e'er saw Irish land, my dear,
We e'er saw Irish land.

Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain;
My Love and Native Land fareweel,
For I maun cross the main, my dear,
For I maun cross the main.

He turn'd him right and round about,
Upon the Irish shore;
And gae his bridle reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore, my dear,
And adieu for evermore.

The soger frae the wars returns,
The sailor frae the main;
But I hae parted frae my love,
Never to meet again, my dear,
Never to meet again.

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk bound to sleep;
I think on him that's far awa,
The lee-lang night and weep, my dear,
The lee-lang night and weep.

[This admirable ballad, like the two immediately preceding, we believe to be wholly the composition of Burns. We are informed, both by Lockhart and by Kirkpatrick Sharpe, that Sir Walter Scott never tired of hearing it sung from the pages of *Johnson*, by his daughter at her piano. Mr. Sharpe has pointed to a very poor stall-ballad, called "Molly Stuart," consisting of eleven verses of disconnected doggerel in which occurs, "like a jewel in a swine's snout," the most picturesque stanza in the text—that beginning, "He turned him right and round about"—but we have no doubt that the broadside referred to was printed after 1796.

Sir Walter, under the impression that the stanza in question is ancient, has made very free use of it, first in "Rokeby" (1813), and then in Elspeth's Ballad, in "The Antiquary" (1816). In the former, as part of the fine song, "A weary lot is thine, fair maid," he thus introduces the verse:—

"He turn'd his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle reins a shake,
Said, 'Adieu for evermore, my love
And adieu for evermore.'"

Burns's original MS. of this song, as sent to Johnson, is now the property of Mr. Patterson, Publisher, Edinburgh. Had the poet lived to see it published along with the music, he would have been under the necessity of altering the rhythm of the opening line, which, as it stands, cannot be made to fit the melody, while each first line of the other four stanzas fits it exactly. It ought to read thus:—"'Twas a' for him, our rightfu' King."]

CORRESPONDENCE.

(*) TO FRANCIS GROSE, ESQ., F.S.A.

(CROMEK, 1808.)*

[1790.]

AMONG the many witch-stories I have heard relating to Alloway Kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three :—

Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind, and bitter blasts of hail—in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in—a farmer, or farmer's servant, was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough-irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighboring smithy. His way lay by the Kirk of Alloway ; and being rather on the anxious look-out in approaching a place so well known to be a favorite haunt of the devil, and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which on his nearer approach plainly showed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above, on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan ; or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not

* This letter was communicated by Mr. Gilchrist of Stamford to Sir Egerton Brydges, who published it in the "Censura Literaria," 1796.

pretend to determine: but so it was that he ventured to go up to, nay, into the very kirk. As luck would have it, his temerity came off unpunished.

The members of the infernal junto were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle, or cauldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c., for the business of the night. It was in for a penny in for a pound, with the honest ploughman; so without ceremony he unhooked the cauldron from off the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.

Another story, which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows:—

On a market-day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirkyard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard-hour—between night and morning.

Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the kirk, yet as it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirkyard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer, stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of

his acquaintance and neighborhood. How the gentleman was dressed tradition does not say; but that the ladies were all in their smocks; and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purposes of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, "Weel luppen, Maggie wi' the short sark!" and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprang to seize him: but it was too late; nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning: but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tail-less condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers, not to stay too late in Ayr Markets.

The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former, with regard to the scene: but as the best authorities give it for Alloway, I shall relate it.

On a summer's evening, about the time that nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the cheerful day, a shepherd boy, belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighborhood of Alloway kirk, had just folded his charge, and was returning home. As he passed the kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of men and women, who were busy pulling

stems of the plant Ragwort. He observed, that as each person pulled a Ragwort, he or she got astride of it, and called out, "up, horsie!" on which the Ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his Ragwort, and cried, with the rest, "up, horsie!" and strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopt, was a merchant's wine cellar in Bordeaux, where, without saying, by your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford, until the morning, foe to the imps and works of darkness, threatened to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousals.

The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse, he fell asleep and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the merchant. Somebody who understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said he was such-a-one's herd in Alloway, and by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale.—I am, &c., &c. R. B.

Not till the middle of November 1790 do we meet with any reference to the poem of "Tam O'Shanter." Mrs. Dunlop sent immediate intimation to Burns of her daughter Mrs. Henrie's safe delivery, at Loudon Castle, of a son and heir who was born on the 15th day of that month. The poet in his reply thus remarks:—"I am much flattered by your approbation of my *Tam O'Shanter* which you expressed in your former letter. . . . I have a copy ready to send you by the first opportunity; it is too heavy to send by post." Thus we see that the poem had been some time in existence, and that a transcript of it, more or less complete, had been communicated to that lady in a now missing letter of prior date. We have no letters of Burns dated in December following, but on 17th January 1791 he seems to have enclosed a copy of this poem to his Edinburgh friend, Wm. Dunbar, Esq., W.S., and requested his strictures on the performance. A week later he enclosed a copy of it in a letter to Alexander Cunningham, in which he refers to it as a poem "just finished—my first essay in the way of tales."

(29) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, *November*, 1790.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Fate has long owed me a letter of good news from you, in return for the many tidings of sorrow which I have received. In this instance I most cordially obey the apostle—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice"—for me, *to sing* for joy, is no new thing; but *to preach* for joy, as I have done in the commencement of this epistle, is a pitch of extravagant rapture to which I never rose before.

I read your letter—I literally jumped for joy—How could such a mercurial creature as a poet lumpishly keep his seat on the receipt of the best news from his best friend? I seized my gilt-headed Wangee rod—an instrument indispensably necessary—in my left hand, in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride—quick and quicker—out skipt I among the broomy banks of Nith to muse over my joy by retail. To keep within the bounds of prose was impossible. Mrs. Little's is a more elegant,* but not a more sincere compliment to the sweet little fellow, than I, extempore almost, poured out to him in the following verses:—

> Sweet flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
> And ward o' mony a prayer,
> What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
> Sae helpless, sweet, and fair.—*See* page 17, *supra*.

I am much flattered by your approbation of my *Tam O'Shanter*, which you express in your former

*The milk-maid at Loudon Castle had composed some rhymes on the same occasion which Mrs. Dunlop forwarded to Burns.

letter; though, by the bye, you load me in that said letter with accusations heavy and many; to all of which I plead, "not guilty!" Your book is, I hear, on the road to reach me.* As to the printing of poetry, when you prepare it for the press you have only to spell it right, and place the capital letters properly: as to the punctuation, the printers do that themselves.

I have a copy of *Tam O'Shanter* ready to send you by the first opportunity; it is too heavy to send by post.

I heard of Mr. Corbet lately.† He, in consequence of your recommendation, is most zealous to serve me. Please favor me soon with an account of your young folk; if Mrs. H. is recovering, and the young gentleman doing well. R. B.

1791.

(*) TO WILLIAM DUNBAR, ESQ., W.S.

(CROMEK, 1808.)‡

ELLISLAND, 17*th Jan.* 1791.

I AM not gone to Elysium, most noble Colonel, but am still here in this sublunary world, serving my God by propagating his image, and honoring my king by begetting him royal subjects.

Many happy returns of the season await my friend.

---

* Mrs. Dunlop was then printing for private circulation a few sketches of her own in prose and verse. Few poets would entrust to printers the punctuation of their lines; and neither did Burns do so with his own poetry. Perhaps he reckoned it a matter of indifference how his correspondent's effusions were treated in that respect.

† One of the general Supervisors of Excise with whom Burns afterwards corresponded.

‡ The date and concluding paragraph of this letter were first given in Hogg and Motherwell's edition 1835. The term "noble Colonel" refers to Dunbar's rank in the *corps d'esprit* called "The Crochallan Fencibles."

May the thorns of Care never beset his path! May Peace be an inmate of his bosom, and Rapture a frequent visitor of his soul! May the bloodhounds of Misfortune never track his steps, nor the screech-owl of Sorrow alarm his dwelling! May Enjoyment tell thy hours, and Pleasure number thy days, thou friend of the bard! Blessed be he that blesseth thee, and cursed be he that curseth thee! ! !

As a further proof that I am still in the land of existence, I send you a poem, the latest I have composed. I have a particular reason for wishing you only to show it to select friends, should you think it worthy a friend's perusal; but if, at your first leisure hour, you will favor me with your opinion of, and strictures on, the performance, it will be an additional obligation on, dear Sir, your deeply indebted humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

(8) TO MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

(CURRIE, 1800.)*

ELLISLAND, *17th Jan.* 1791.

TAKE these three† guineas, and place them over against that damned account of yours, which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as write apologies to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Not all the labors of Hercules; not all the Hebrews' three centu-

---

*The reader, on comparing our text with that of Currie, will see what liberties he took with the original. We are indebted to George Wilson, Esq., grandson of Mr. Hill, for access to the poet's MS.

†In Currie's edition there is here a misprint of "two" for *three*. The original account between the poet and Peter Hill was lately in the possession of Thomas Thorburn, Esq., of Ryedale, and under date Jan. 20, 1791, Hill credits Burns with a payment of £3 to account, leaving a balance of £3, 7s, 5d.

ries of Egyptian bondage, were such an insuperable business, such an infernal task!!

Poverty! thou half-sister of Death, thou cousin-german of Hell! where shall I find force of execration equal to thy demerits? By thee, the venerable Ancient, though in this insidious obscurity grown hoary in the practice of every virtue under heaven, now laden with years and wretchedness, implores from a stony-hearted son of Mammon, whose sun of prosperity never knew a cloud, a little, little aid to support his very existence, and is by him denied and insulted. By thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or writhes, in bitterness of soul, under the contumely of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. By thee, the man of Genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see, in suffering silence, his remark neglected, and his person despised, while shallow Greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of Worth that have reason to complain of thee: the children of Folly and Vice, though in common with thee the offspring of Evil, smart equally under thy rod. Owing to thee, the man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education is condemned as a fool for his dissipation; despised and shunned as a needy wretch when his follies, as usual, have brought him to want; and when his unprincipled necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country.

But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. *His* early extravagances and follies are fire and spirit; *his* consequent wants are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he sets out with a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, and massacre peaceful na-

tions, he returns laden with the spoils of rapine and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a Villain and a Lord. Nay, worst of all—alas for helpless woman! the needy wretch who was shivering at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is ridden down by the chariot wheels of the Coroneted Rip, hurrying on to the adulterous assignation; she who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade!!!

Well! divines may say of it what they please; but I maintain that a hearty blast of execration is to the mind what breaking a vein is to the body; the overloaded sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations. I feel myself vastly easier than when I began my letter, and can now go on to business. You will be so good then as send, by the first Dumfries carrier, all, or as many as you have by you, of the following books. I am, &c., R. B.

(6) TO ALEX. CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

(Currie, 1800.)

Ellisland, 23*d January* 1791.

Many happy returns of the season to you, my dear friend! As many of the good things of this life as is consistent with the usual mixture of good and evil in the cup of Being!

I have just finished a poem—Tam O'Shanter—which you will receive enclosed. It is my first essay in the way of tales.

I have these several months been hammering away at an elegy on the amiable and accomplished Miss Burnet. I have got, and can get, no farther than the following fragment, on which please give me your strictures. In all kinds of poetic composition, I set

great store by your opinion; but in sentimental verses, in the poetry of the heart, no Roman Catholic ever set more value on the infallibility of the Holy Father than I do on yours.

I mean the introductory couplets as text verses.

ELEGY ON THE LATE MISS BURNET OF MONBODDO.

(*See* page 18, *supra.*)

Let me hear from you soon, Adieu!

ROBT. BURNS.

(30) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, *7th February*, 1791.*

WHEN I tell you, Madam, that by a fall, not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple for some time, and that this is the first day my arm and hand have been able to serve me in writing; you will allow that it is too good an apology for my seemingly ungrateful silence. I am now getting better, and am able to rhyme a little, which implies some tolerable ease; as I cannot think that the most poetic genius is able to compose on the rack.

I do not remember if ever I mentioned to you my having an idea of composing an elegy on the late Miss Burnet, of Monboddo. I had the honor of being pretty well acquainted with her, and have seldom felt so much at the loss of an acquaintance, as when I heard that so amiable and accomplished a piece of God's work was no more. I have as yet gone no

* Chambers, with a strange defiance of arithmetic has changed this date to "7th April." The boy Francis Wallace was born 18th Aug. 1789, consequently on February 7th, 1791, he was just past 17 months old. The accident here referred to must have occurred in January, and according to later correspondence, he was the victim of a similar fall at the end of March following.

farther than the following fragment, of which please let me have your opinion. You know that elegy is a subject so much exhausted, that any new idea on the business is not to be expected; 'tis well if we can place an old idea in a new light. How far I have succeeded as to this last, you will judge from what follows.

[Here follows the Elegy (see page 18, *supra*), same as in the letter to Cunningham above given; but with the following stanza added:]—

> The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
> That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care;
> So deckt the woodbine sweet yon aged tree,
> So, from it ravag'd, leaves it bleak and bare.

I have proceeded no further.

Your kind letter, with your kind *remembrance* of your godson, came safe. This last, Madam, is scarcely what my pride can bear. As to the little fellow, he is, partiality apart, the finest boy I have of a long time seen. He is now seventeen months old, has the smallpox and measles over, has cut several teeth, and never yet had a grain of doctor's drugs in his bowels.

I am truly happy to hear the "little floweret" is blooming so fresh and fair, and that the "mother plant" is rather recovering her drooping head. Soon and well may her "cruel wounds" be healed! I have written thus far with a good deal of difficulty. When I get a little abler you shall hear farther from, Madam, yours, R. B.

(?) TO THE REV. ARCH. ALISON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, NEAR DUMFRIES, *14th February, 1791.*

SIR,—You must by this time have set me down as one of the most ungrateful of men. You did me the honor to present me with a book, which does honor

to science and the intellectual powers of man, and I have not even so much as acknowledged the receipt of it. The fact is, you yourself are to blame for it. Flattered as I was by your telling me that you wished to have my opinion of the work, the old spiritual enemy of mankind, who knows well that vanity is one of the sins that most easily beset me, put it into my head to ponder over the performance with the look-out of a critic, and to draw up, forsooth, a deep-learned digest of strictures on a composition, of which, in fact, until I read the book, I did not even know the first principles. I own, Sir, that at first glance, several of your propositions startled me as paradoxical. That the martial clangor of a trumpet had something in it vastly more grand, heroic, and sublime, than the twingle-twangle of a Jew's harp; that the delicate flexure of a rose-twig, when the half-blown flower is heavy with the tears of the dawn, was infinitely more beautiful and elegant than the upright stub of a burdock; and that from something innate and independent of all associations of ideas—these I had set down as irrefragable, orthodox truths, until perusing your book shook my faith. In short, Sir, except Euclid's Elements of Geometry, which I made a shift to unravel by my father's fire-side, in the winter evenings of the first season I held the plough, I never read a book which gave me such a quantum of information, and added so much to my stock of ideas, as your "Essays on the Principles of Taste." One thing, Sir, you must forgive my mentioning as an uncommon merit in the work, I mean the language. To clothe abstract philosophy in elegance of style, sounds something like a contradiction in terms; but you have convinced me that they are quite compatible.

I enclose you some poetic bagatelles of my late composition. The one in print is my first essay in the way of telling a tale.—I am, Sir, &c. R. B.

The gentleman above addressed was an Episcopal minister in Edinburgh whom the poet met one evening, in Feb. 1789, at the house of Professor Dugald Stewart. In the reminiscences of Burns sent by the Professor to Dr. Currie, he thus refers to that meeting. "My friend Mr. Alison, was the only other person in company. I never saw Burns more interesting. A present which Mr. Alison sent him afterwards of his 'Essays on Taste' drew from the poet a letter of acknowledgement, which I remember to have read with some degree of surprise at the distinct conception he appeared from it to have formed of the general principles of the doctrine of Association." The doctrine referred to is now considered to have been one of the dreams of philosophy, which was hastily adopted by a few metaphysical writers in Edinburgh about the close of last century, and then dismissed as baseless, like the fabric of other dreams. Burns's letter on the subject, although apparently earnest enough, reads somewhat like a satire on the new philosophy. Mr. Alison was father of Sir Arch. Alison, Bart., Sheriff of Lanarkshire, the author of a History of Europe, from a high Conservative point of sight.

PROSPECTUS OF A NEW EDITION OF POEMS BY MICHAEL BRUCE. LONDON, February 1791.

"By subscription. Speedily will be published, price Three Shillings, by J. Forbes, Covent Garden, London, a new edition of Poems by the late Michael Bruce, to which will be subjoined a few select pieces by Robert Burns. The profits which may arise from this publication are to be employed solely for the support of Michael Bruce's mother."

The Rev. George Husband Baird, on 8th Feb. 1791, addressed a letter to Burns, which Dr. Currie printed as part of the correspondence of our poet. The young clergyman who then applied to Burns on the subject was residing at the Duke of Athole's house in London. In Nov. 1792 he was admitted as minister of New Greyfriars' Church, Edinburgh, and at the same time was appointed joint-Professor of Oriental Languages with Dr. James Robertson, in the college there. Ultimately, Baird was Principal of the University of Edinburgh.

He now solicited the aid of Burns's name and pen in support of the scheme he had embarked in: "May I beg to

know (he wrote,) if you will take the trouble of perusing the unpublished manuscripts of Bruce that I am in possession of; and of giving your opinion, and suggesting what curtailments, alterations, or amendments, occur to you as advisable? And will you allow us to let it be known, that a few lines by you will be added to the volume?"

(1) TO THE REV. G. H. BAIRD, LONDON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, [*February*,] 1791.

WHY did you, my dear Sir, write to me in such a hesitating style on the business of poor Bruce? Don't I know, and have I not felt, the many ills, the peculiar ills that poetic flesh is heir to? You shall have your choice of all the unpublished poems I have; and had your letter been so directed as to have reached me sooner (it only came to my hand this moment), I should have directly put you out of suspense on the subject. I only ask that some prefatory advertisement in the book, as well as the subscription bills, may bear that the publication is solely for the benefit of Bruce's mother. I would not put it in the power of ignorance to surmise, or malice to insinuate, that I clubbed a share in the work from mercenary motives. Nor need you give me credit for any remarkable generosity in my part of the business. I have such a host of peccadilloes, failings, follies, and backslidings (any body but myself might perhaps give some of them a worse appellation), that by way of some balance, however trifling, in the account, I am fain to do any good that occurs in my very limited power to a fellow-creature, just for the selfish purpose of clearing a little the vista of retrospection.

ROBT. BURNS.

Unfortunately, Currie did not think proper to give the whole of the above letter to the public, and the MS. seems now to have been lost. Mr. John Small, A.M., of the University Library of Edinburgh, recently cleared up the little mystery with which Burns's share in this benevolent movement has been shrouded for eighty years past. The papers of the late Principal Baird, in possession of Professor Balfour, have been carefully examined by Mr. Small, in relation to the edition of Bruce's poems referred to; and in a scholarly paper he has all but demonstrated the fact that Logan, and not Bruce, was the author of the "Ode to the Cuckoo." He has discovered also from those Baird papers, that Burns generously offered several of his best unpublished poems to forward the scheme in behalf of the mother of Bruce, and among these he tendered the newly finished "Tam O'Shanter!" He has also ascertained the reason why none of Burns's pieces were added to Bruce's volume. This was "in consequence of the opposition of Dr. Blair and Dr. Moore, who argued that from the moral tendency of Bruce's poetry, the insertion of Burns's 'Alloway Kirk' would be as gross a violation of propriety, as the exhibition of a farce after a tragedy." For that pious reason, "Alloway Kirk," and other poems offered by Burns, were not accepted! In what public estimation *now*, are the writings of Dr. Blair, of Dr. Moore, and even of Michael Bruce, when compared with Burns?

(1) TO MRS. GRAHAM OF FINTRY.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[ELLISLAND, *Feb.* 1791.]

MADAM,— Whether it is that the story of our Mary, Queen, of Scots, has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have in the enclosed ballad,* succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past; on that account I enclose it particularly to you. It is true, the purity of my motives may be suspected. I am already deeply

* See page 20, *supra*.

indebted to Mr. Graham's goodness; and, what *in the usual ways of men* is of infinitely greater importance, Mr. G. can do me service of the utmost importance in time to come. I was born a poor dog; and however I may occasionally pick a better bone than I used to do, I know I must live and die poor: but I will indulge the flattering faith that my poetry will considerably outlive my poverty; and without any fustian affectation of spirit, I can promise and affirm, that it must be no ordinary craving of the latter shall ever make me do any thing injurious to the honest fame of the former. Whatever may be my failings, for failings are a part of human nature, may they ever be those of a generous heart, and an independent mind. It is no fault of mine that I was born to dependence; nor is it Mr. Graham's chiefest praise that he can command influence; but it is his merit to bestow, not only with the kindness of a brother, but with the politeness of a gentleman; and I trust it shall be mine, to receive with thankfulness, and remember with undiminished gratitude. R. B.

(*) TO DR. JOHN MOORE, LONDON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, *27th Feb.* 1791.

I DO not know, Sir, whether you are a subscriber to Grose's "Antiquities of Scotland." If you are, the enclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favor to send me a dozen copies of the *proof-sheet*, of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the principal end I have in view: it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard; and also of shewing you, that

the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize are still employed in the way you wish.

The *Elegy on Captain Henderson*, is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of no service to their friends after they have past that bourn where all other kindness ceases to be of any avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead, is, I fear, very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living: and as a very orthodox text, I forget where, in Scripture, says, "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;" so say I, whatsoever is not detrimental to society, and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by his creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my religious tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea, that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly beloved friend, or still more dearly beloved mistress, who is gone to the world of spirits.

The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with "Percy's Reliques of English Poetry." By the way, how much is every honest heart, which has a tincture of Caledonian prejudice, obliged to you for your glorious story of *Buchanan and Targe*. 'Twas an unequivocal proof of your loyal gallantry of soul, giving "Targe" the victory. I should have been mortified to the ground if you had not.*

* * * * *

I have just read over, once more of many times, your "Zeluco." I marked with my pencil, as I went along, every passage that pleased me particularly above the rest; and one, or two I think, which, with hum-

* The story referred to represents *Buchanan*, a Covenanter, disputing with *Targe*, a Jacobite, about the purity of Mary Queen of Scots. A hand-to-hand fight is the outcome, and the novelist gives the palm to *Targe*.

ble deference, I am disposed to think unequal to the merits of the book. I have sometimes thought to transcribe these marked passages, or at least so much of them as to point where they are, and send them to you. Original strokes that strongly depict the human heart, is your and Fielding's province, beyond any other novelist I have ever perused. Richardson indeed might perhaps be excepted; but, unhappily, his *dramatis personæ* are beings of some other world; and however they may captivate the inexperienced, romantic, fancy of a boy or a girl, they will ever, in proportion as we have made human nature our study, dissatisfy our riper years.

As to my private concerns, I am going on, a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord, and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the list of excise as a supervisor. I am not yet employed as such, but in a few years I shall fall into the file of supervisorship by seniority. I have had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn; the patron from whom all my fame and good fortune took its rise. Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence; so soon as the prince's friends had got in (and every dog, you know, has his day), my getting forward in the Excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be. Though this was a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet, thank Heaven, I can live and rhyme as I am; and as to my boys, poor little fellows! if I cannot place them on as high an elevation in life, as I could wish, I shall, if I am favored so much of the Disposer of events as to see that period, fix them on as broad and independent a basis as possible. Among the many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish ancestors this is one of the best, *Better be the head o' the commonality, than the tail o' the gentry.*

But I am got on a subject, which, however, interesting to me, is of no manner of consequence to you; so I shall give you a short poem on the other page, and close this with assuring you how sincerely I have the honor to be, yours &c. R. B.

Written on the blank leaf of a book, which I presented to a very young lady, whom I had formerly characterised under the denomination of THE ROSE-BUD.

(Here was inscribed the Poem at page 49, Vol. III—Beauteous Rose-bud, young and gay.)

The foregoing letter is the last that has been given to the public of Burns's letters to Dr. Moore. That gentleman's reply, dated 29th March 1791, was printed by Dr. Currie. He begins by admitting that the Rev. Mr. Baird had before transmitted to him a copy of the Elegy on Capt. Henderson, and the printed poem on "Alloway Church." His criticisms on these gems of Burns's muse are rather frigid; and he closes by advising him to avoid the Scottish dialect in his future poems, and make entire use of the modern English: "Why (he asks) should you write only for a part of the island, when you can command the admiration of the whole?" He also requests Burns to favor him with his observations on "Zeluco," and not to suppress his censure, if he any have: "Trust me it will break no squares between us—I am not akin to the Bishop of Grenada."

Burns's copy of "Zeluco" with his pencil observations on the margin, was presented to Mrs. Dunlop. A grandson of hers carried it to the East Indies, where one of the volumes was consumed by the white ants. The other volume (the first) is still preserved, and one of the poet's observations would not have been relished by Dr. Moore. At conclusion of Chap. xii. a lady's maid thus addresses her mistress in support of a bashful suitor for the lady's hand: "Although he is languishing for love of your ladyship, yet rather than open his mouth to you on the subject, he will certainly die."—"Die! nonsense," cried the widow, "Yes, die!" cried the maid, "and what is worse, die in a dark lanthorn; at least, I am told that is what he is in danger of." Burns's note is "Rather a bad joke—an unlucky attempt at humor."

On a blank leaf fronting the title-page the poet has inscribed "To my much esteemed Friend, Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop.

ROBT. BURNS."

The notes are not very numerous. The book is now in possession of Mr. Wallace Dunlop, C.B., great-grandson of the poet's patroness. To the late Dr. Carruthers of Inverness, we were indebted for this account of the poet's annotated copy of "Zeluco."

(?) TO MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER,

WITH A EWE-MILK CHEESE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, [*March* 1791.]*

MY DEAR HILL,—I shall say nothing at all to your mad present; you have long and often been of important service to me, and I suppose you mean to go on conferring obligations until I shall not be able to lift up my face before you. In the mean time, as Sir Roger de Coverley, because it happened to be a cold day in which he made his will, ordered his servants great coats for mourning; so, because I have been this week plagued with an indigestion, I have sent you by the carrier a fine old ewe-milk cheese.

Indigestion is the devil: nay, 'tis the devil and hell. It besets a man in every one of his senses. I lose my appetite at the sight of successful Knavery; and sicken to loathing at the noise and nonsense of

* The original MS. of this letter is still preserved in Mr. Hill's family, but bears no date: Dr. Currie placed it under "March 1789," no doubt induced to do so by the reference near the close, to "the Duke of Queensberry's late political conduct." There is, however, another reference which compels us to place the letter under a later date:—"Candlish, the earliest friend, except my *only* brother, that I have on earth." The poet's brother William was alive till July 1790, and we have taken the earliest probable occasion to introduce the present letter, after that event. The mention of "the King's Arms inn *here*," suggests a date even later.

self-important Folly. When the hollow-hearted wretch takes me by the hand, the feeling spoils my dinner; the proud man's wine so offends my palate that it choaks me in the gullet; and the *pulvilis'd*, feathered, pert coxcomb is so horrible in my nostril that my stomach turns.

If ever you have any of these disagreeable sensations, let me prescribe for your Patience a bit of my Cheese. I know that you are no niggard of your good things among your friends, and some of them are in much need of a slice. There, in my eye, is our friend Smellie; a man positively of the first abilities and greatest strength of mind, as well as one of the best hearts and keenest wits that I have ever met with; when you see him—as, alas! he too often is, smarting at the pinch of distressful circumstance aggravated by the sneer of contumelious greatness, a bit of my cheese alone will not cure him, but if you add a tankard of brown stout, and superadd a magnum of right Oporto, you will see his sorrows vanish like the morning mist before the summer sun.

Candlish, the earliest friend, except my only brother, that I have on earth, and one of the worthiest fellows that ever any man called by the name of Friend, if a luncheon of my cheese would help to rid him of some of his superabundant modesty, you would do well to give it him.

David,* with his "Courant" comes too across my recollection, and I beg you will help him largely from the said ewe-milk cheese, to enable him to digest those damn'd bedaubing paragraphs with which he is eternally larding the lean characters of certain great men in a certain great town. I grant you the periods are very well turned; so, a fresh egg is a very good thing, but when thrown at a man in a pillory, it does

* David Ramsay, already referred to in the letter to Hill of 2nd April 1789. He survived till June 27th, 1813.

not at all improve his figure, not to mention the irreparable loss of the egg.

My facetious little friend, Colonel Dunbar, I would wish also to be a partaker; not to digest his spleen, for that he laughs off, but to digest his last night's wine at the last field-day of the Crochallan corps.

Among our common friends I must not forget one of the dearest of them, Cunningham. The brutality, insolence, and selfishness of a world unworthy of having such a fellow as he in it, I know sticks in his stomach, and if you can help him to any thing that will make him a little easier on that score, it will be very obliging.

As to honest John Somerville,* he is such a contented, happy man, that I know not what can annoy him, except perhaps he may not have got the better of a parcel of modest anecdotes, which a certain poet gave him one night at supper, the last time the said poet was in town.

Though I have mentioned so many men of Law, I shall have nothing to do with them professionally—the Faculty are beyond my prescription. As to their *clients*, that is another thing; God knows they have much to digest!

The clergy I pass by; their profundity of erudition, and their liberality of sentiment; their total want of pride, and their detestation of hypocrisy, are so proverbially notorious as to place them far, far above either my praise or censure.

I was going to mention a man of worth, whom I have the honor to call friend, the Laird of Craigdarroch; but I have spoken to the landlord of the King's

* A confidential friend of Burns, whose name appears as a subscriber for four copies of the Edinburgh edition 1787. The poet presented him with a proof impression of his portrait (Beugo's engraving), which came into the possession of the late Mr. Alex. Russel of the *Scotsman*. Colonel Somerville (a son of the poet's friend) left a large sum of money, many thousands of which will fall to Mr. Russel's family, after the death of a lady annuitant.

Arms inn here, to have at the next county meeting, a large ewe-milk cheese on the table, for the benefit of the Dumfriesshire Whigs, to enable them to digest the Duke of Queensberry's late political conduct.

I have just this moment an opportunity of a private hand to Edinburgh, as perhaps you would not digest double postage.—So, God bless you!

ROBT. BURNS.

(?) TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM, WRITER,

ST. JAMES'S SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

(Partly printed by CURRIE, 1800, and completed by DOUGLAS, 1877.*)

ELLISLAND, 11*th March* 1791.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,—I received your *first* letter two days ago; the last came to hand this moment. I was highly delighted with the well carried on allegory in your friend's letter. I read it to two or three acquaintances who have souls to enjoy a good thing, and we had a very hearty laugh at it. I have felt along the line of my Muse's inclination, and I fear your Archery subject would be up-hill work with her. I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish, rather than from the impulse, but I never succeeded to any purpose. One of these times I shall ever remember with gnashing of teeth. 'Twas on the death of the late Lord President Dundas. My very worthy and most respected friend, Mr. Alex. Wood, Surgeon, urged me to pay a compliment in the way of my trade to his Lordship's memory. Well, to work I went, and produced a copy of Elegiac verses, some of them I own rather common-place, and others rather hide-bound,

* Compared with the MS. in the family of the late James Cunningham, Esq., W. S., Edinburgh, the son of our poet's correspondent, whose death at the venerable age of 78, occurred 1879.

but on the whole, though they were far from being in my best manner, they were tolerable, and might have been thought very clever. I wrote a letter, which however *was* in my very best manner; and inclosing my poem, Mr. Wood carried all together to Mr. Solicitor Dundas that then was, and not finding him at home, left the parcel for him. His Solicitorship never took the smallest notice of the letter, the Poem, or the Poet. From that time, highly as I respect the talents of their family, I never see the name Dundas, in the column of a newspaper, but my heart seems straitened for room in my bosom; and if I am obliged to read aloud a paragraph relating to one of them, I feel my forehead flush, and my nether lip quiver. Had I been an obscure scribbler, as I was then in the hey-day of my fame; or had I been a dependent hanger-on for favor or pay; or had the bearer of the letter been any other than a gentleman who has done honor to the city in which he lives, to the country that produced him, and to the God that created him, Mr. Solicitor might have had some apology —but enough of this ungracious subject.

A friend of mine who transcribed the last parcel I sent you is to be with me in a day or two, and I shall get him to copy out the two poems you mention.* I have this evening sketched out a song which I had a great mind to send you, though I foresee that it will cost you another groat of postage—by the way, you once mentioned to me a method of franking letters to you, but I have forgotten the direction—My song is intended to sing to a strathspey, or reel, of which I am very fond, called in Cumming's collection of Strathspeys, "Ballendalloch's Reel," and in other

* This amanuensis seems to have been the same who about this period transcribed a considerable portion of the poet's unpublished pieces into a bound volume, for Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell. His name has nowhere been stated, but Burns indicates, in a note to a transcript by him of the *Autobiography*, that he was a clergyman or a licentiate of the kirk.

collections that I have met with, it is known by the name of "Camdelmore." It takes three stanzas of four lines each to go through the whole tune. I shall give the song to Johnson for the fourth vol. of his publication of Scots songs, which he has just now in hand.

SONG.

Sweet are the banks—the banks o' Doon,
The spreading flowers are fair,
And every thing is blythe and glad,
But I am fu' o' care, &c.

See p. 24, *supra.*

If the foregoing piece be worth your strictures, let me have them. For my own part, a thing that I have composed, always appears through a double portion of that partial medium in which an Author will ever view his own works. I believe in general Novelty has something in it that inebriates the fancy, and not unfrequently dissipates and fumes away like other intoxication, and leaves the poor patient as usual with an aching heart. A striking instance of this might be adduced in the revolution of many a Hymeneal honeymoon. But lest I sink into stupid prose, and so, sacrilegiously intrude on the office of my Parish-priest, who is in himself one vast Constellation of dulness, and from his weekly Zenith, rays out his contradictory stupidity to the no small edification and enlightening of the heavy and opaque Pericraniums of his gaping admirers, I shall fill up the page in my own way, and give you another song of my late composition which will appear in Johnson's work as well as the former. You must know a beautiful Jacobite air—"There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame." When political combustion ceases to be the object of Princes and Patriots, it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of Historians and Poets.

SONG.

By yon castle wa', at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing tho' his head it was grey;
And as he was singing, the tears down came—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame, &c., &c.

See page 22, *supra.*

If you like the air, and if the stanzas hit your fancy, you cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me, if, by the charms of your delightful voice, you would give my honest effusion to "the memory of joys that are past," to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure. But I have scribbled on till I hear the clock has intimated the near approach of

"That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane."

So good-night to you! And sound be your sleep, and delectable your dreams. Apropos, how do you like this thought in a ballad I have just now on the tapis?

I look to the west when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For far in the west lives he I loe best—
The man that is dear to my babie and me!

Good night, once more; and God bless you!

ROBT. BURNS.

(?) TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., AYR.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

[*March* 1791.]

WHILE here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger, and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a

tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound "Auld Toon o' Ayr" conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine. Here it is:

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!
&c. &c.—*See* page 25, *supra*.

(1) TO ALEX. DALZIEL, ESQ., FACTOR, FINDLAYSTON HOUSE.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

ELLISLAND, *March* 19, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have taken the liberty to frank this letter to you, as it incloses an idle poem of mine, which I send you; and, God knows, you may perhaps pay dear enough for it, if you read it through. Not that this is my own opinion; but an author, by the time he has composed and corrected his works, has quite pored away all his powers of critical discrimination.

I can easily guess from my own heart, what you have felt on a late most melancholy event. God knows what I have suffered, at the loss of my best friend, my first, my dearest patron and benefactor; the man to whom I owe all that I am and have! I am gone into mourning for him, and with more sincerity of grief than I fear some will who by nature's ties ought to feel on the occasion.

I will be exceedingly obliged to you indeed, to let me know the news of the noble family, how the poor mother and the two sisters support their loss. I had a packet of poetic bagatelles ready to send to Lady Betty, when I saw the fatal tidings in the newspaper. I see by the same channel that the honored REMAINS

of my noble patron, are designed to be brought to the family burial place. Dare I trouble you to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to pay a tear to the last sight of my ever revered benefactor? It will oblige me beyond expression. R. B.

James, fourteenth Earl of Glencairn, the warm-hearted patron of Burns, had sunk into a condition of declining health, and in order to escape the rigor of a Scottish winter had removed to Lisbon in the hope that its milder temperature might prove beneficial. That remedial measure however failed to stay the progress of his disease, and he was advised to return to England; but on his homeward journey he died at Falmouth, near the close of January 1791, in the forty-second year of his age. Burns seems to have addressed the above letter to his lordship's factor, very soon after the first intelligence of the lamented occurrence. He must, however, have been misinformed as to the arrangements respecting the funeral; for the Earl's family possessions in Kilmaurs, including the interesting burial vault, had been sold a few years before his lordship's death, and his remains now lie in the church at Falmouth. His brother John, who succeeded to the earldom, died in 1796, and was interred in St. Cuthbert's churchyard, Edinburgh. At a later period (Aug. 12, 1794), the poet expressed his respect for the memory of his deceased patron by naming his fourth son "James Glencairn Burns."

(*) TO LADY ELIZABETH CUNNINGHAM.

(CURRIE, 1808.)

[ELLISLAND, *March* 1791.]

MY LADY,—I would, as usual, have availed myself of the privilege your goodness has allowed me, of sending you any thing I compose in my poetical way; but as I had resolved, so soon as the shock of my irreparable loss would allow me, to pay a tribute to my late benefactor, I determined to make that the

first piece I should do myself the honor of sending you. Had the wing of my fancy been equal to the ardor of my heart, the inclosed had been much more worthy your perusal :* as it is, I beg leave to lay it at your ladyship's feet. As all the world knows my obligations to the late Earl of Glencairn, I would wish to shew as openly that my heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honor to wear to his lordship's memory, were not the "mockery of woe." Nor shall my gratitude perish with me!—If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honor and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn!

I was about to say, my lady, that if you think the poem may venture to see the light, I would, in some way or other, give it to the world. R. B.

([31]) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, 11*th April*, 1791.

I AM once more able, my honored friend, to return you, with my own hand, thanks for the many instances of your friendship, and particularly for your kind anxiety in this last disaster that my evil genius had in store for me. However, life is chequered—joy and sorrow—for on Saturday morning last, Mrs. Burns made me a present of a fine boy ;† rather stouter, but not so handsome as your godson was at his time of life. Indeed I look on your little namesake to be

* "Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn," page 28, *supra*.

† On April 9th, 1791, the poet's third son Wm. Nicol Burns was born.

my *chef d'œuvre* in that species of manufacture, as I look on "Tam O'Shanter" to be my standard performance in the poetical line. 'Tis true, both the one and the other discover a spice of roguish waggery, that might perhaps be as well spared; but then they also show, in my opinion, a force of genius and a finishing polish, that I despair of ever excelling. Mrs. Burns is getting stout again, and laid as lustily about her to-day at breakfast, as a reaper from the corn-ridge. That is the peculiar privilege and blessing of our hale, sprightly damsels, that are bred among the *hay and heather*. We cannot hope for that highly polished mind, that charming delicacy of soul, which is found among the female world in the more elevated stations of life, and which is certainly by far the most bewitching charm in the famous cestus of Venus. It is indeed such an inestimable treasure, that where it can be had in its native heavenly purity, unstained by some one or other of the many shades of affectation, and unalloyed by some one or other of the many species of caprice, I declare to Heaven, I should think it cheaply purchased at the expense of every other earthly good! But as this angelic creature is, I am afraid, extremely rare in any station and rank of life, and totally denied to such a humble one as mine, we meaner mortals must put up with the next rank of female excellence. As fine a figure and face we can produce as any rank of life whatever; rustic, native grace; unaffected modesty, and unsullied purity; nature's mother-wit, and the rudiments of taste; a simplicity of soul, unsuspicious of, because unacquainted with, the crooked ways of a selfish, interested, disingenuous world; and the dearest charm, of all the rest —a yielding sweetness of disposition, and a generous warmth of heart, grateful for love on our part, and ardently glowing with a more than equal return; these, with a healthy frame, a sound, vigorous constitution,

which your higher ranks can scarcely ever hope to enjoy, are the charms of lovely woman in my humble walk of life.

This is the greatest effort my broken arm has yet made.* Do let me hear, by first post, how cher petit Monsieur † comes on with his small pox. May Almighty goodness preserve and restore him! R. B.

(1) TO ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER, ESQ.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, *April*, 1791.

SIR—Nothing less than the unfortunate accident I have met with, could have prevented my grateful acknowledgements for your letters. His own favorite poem, and that an essay in a walk of the muses entirely new to him, where consequently his hopes and fears were on the most anxious alarm for his success in the attempt—to have that poem so much applauded by one of the first judges, was the most delicious vibration that ever trilled along the heart-strings of a poor poet. However, Providence, to keep up the proper proportion of evil with the good, which it seems is necessary in this sublunary state, thought proper to check my exultation by a very serious misfortune. A day or two after I received your letter, my

* The letter to Mrs. Dunlop of 7th February preceding, announced the writer's convalescence after a fall with his horse in January. On that occasion, his arm was bruised, but not very severely. It appears from the present letter, and two or three which follow, that through a similar accident, towards the end of March his right arm was broken, and we find him complaining of the consequences down to nearly the end of April. In a letter to Peter Hill dated about Midsummer of the same year, he complains of "a bruised leg;" and again on 6th October thereafter, in a letter to Mr. Graham of Fintry, as well as in his poetical epistle to him, he refers to his bruised leg, and "a sheetful of groans wrung from him in his elbow-chair, with one unlucky foot on a stool before him." The year 1791, therefore, was an unlucky one for the poet's limbs.

† The child of Mrs. Henri, daughter of Mrs. Dunlop.

horse came down with me and broke my right arm. As this is the first service my arm has done me since its disaster, I find myself unable to do more than just in general terms to thank you for this additional instance of your patronage and friendship. As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there; one of them, the hit at the lawyer and priest, I shall cut out; as to the falling off in the catastrophe, for the reason you justly adduce, it cannot easily be remedied.* Your approbation, Sir, has given me such additional spirits to persevere in this species of poetic composition, that I am already revolving two or three stories in my fancy. If I can bring these floating ideas to bear any kind of embodied form, it will give me an additional opportunity of assuring you how much I have the honor to be, &c. R. B.

---

*Mr. Tytler's letter to Burns containing a critique, moderately appreciative of *Tam O'Shanter*, is dated 12th March 1791, but it may not have reached the poet for several days after its date. The only fault he pointed out applied to "the winding-up, or conclusion of the story, as not being commensurate to the interest which is excited by the descriptive painting of the preceding parts.—The result (he said) is not adequate to the fine preparation; but for this you have a good apology—you stick to the popular tale." Four lines he judiciously recommended to be suppressed as "they derive all their merit from the satire they contain, and seem really misplaced among the circumstances of pure horror." Burns listened to that advice, the lines being the following:—

"Three Lawyer's tongues turn'd inside out,
Wi' lies seem'd like a beggar's clout;
And priest's hearts, rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk."

(?) TO CHARLES SHARPE, ESQ., OF HODDAM,

UNDER A FICTITIOUS SIGNATURE, ENCLOSING A BALLAD.

(CURRIE, 1801.)

ELLISLAND, *22nd April* 1791.*

IT is true, Sir, you are a gentleman of rank and fortune, and I am a poor devil; you are a feather in the cap of society, and I am a very hobnail in his shoes; yet I have the honor to belong to the same family with you, and on that score I now address you. You will perhaps suspect that I am going to claim affinity with the ancient and honorable house of Kirkpatrick. No, no, Sir: I cannot indeed be properly said to belong to any house, or even any province or kingdom; as my mother, who for many years was spouse to a marching regiment, gave me into this bad world, aboard the packet-boat, somewhere between Donaghadee and Portpatrick. By our common family, I mean, Sir, the family of the Muses. I am a fiddler, and a poet; and you, I am told, play an exquisite violin, and have a standard taste in the *Belles Lettres*. The other day, a brother-catgut gave me a charming Scots air of your composition. If I was pleased with the tune, I was in raptures with the title you have given it; and taking up the idea I have spun it into the three stanzas enclosed.† Will you allow me, Sir, to present you them, as the dearest offering that a misbegotten son of Poverty and Rhyme has to give! I have a longing to take you by the hand, and unburden my heart by saying: "Sir, I honor you as a man who supports the dignity of human nature amid

* This is the date attached by Burns to the letter, in his transcript of it in the Glenriddell MSS.

† The verses referred to have not been given, or indicated, in connexion with this clever effusion.

an age when frivolity and avarice have, between them, debased us below the brutes that perish!" But, alas! Sir, to me you are unapproachable. It is true the Muses baptised me in Castalian streams; but the thoughtless gipsies forgot to give me a name. As the sex have served many a good fellow, the Nine have given me a great deal of pleasure; but, bewitching jades! they have beggared me. Would they but spare me a little of their cast linen! were it only to put it in my power to say that I have a shirt on my back! But the idle wenches, like Solomon's lilies, "they toil not, neither do they spin;" so I must e'en continue to tie my remnant of a cravat, like the hangman's rope, round my naked throat, and coax my galligaskins to keep together their many-colored fragments. As to the affair of shoes, I have given that up. My pilgrimages in my ballad-trade, from town to town, and on your stony-hearted turnpikes too, are what not even the hide of Job's Behemoth could bear. The coat on my back is no more: I shall not speak evil of the dead. It would be equally unhandsome and ungrateful to find fault with my old surtout, which so kindly supplies and conceals the want of that coat. My hat indeed is a great favorite; and though I got it literally for an old song, I would not exchange it for the best beaver in Britain. I was, during several years, a kind of fac-totum servant to a country clergyman, where I pickt up a good many scraps of learning, particularly in some branches of the mathematics. Whenever I feel inclined to rest myself on my way, I take my seat under a hedge, laying my poetic wallet on the one side, and my fiddle-case on the other, and placing my hat between my legs, I can, by means of its brim, or rather brims, go through the whole doctrine of the conic sections.

However, Sir, don't let me mislead you, as if I would interest your pity. Fortune has so much for-

saken me, that she has taught me to live without her; and amid all my rags and poverty, I am as independent, and much more happy, than a monarch of the world. According to the hackneyed metaphor, I value the several actors in the great drama of life, simply as they act their parts. I can look on a worthless fellow of a duke with unqualified contempt, and can regard an honest scavenger with sincere respect.* As you, Sir, go through your rôle with such distinguished merit, permit me to make one in the chorus of universal applause, and assure you that with the highest respect,—I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHNNY FAA.

(*) TO LADY WINIFRED MAXWELL CONSTABLE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[*April* 1791.]

MY LADY,—Nothing less than the unlucky accident of having lately broken my right arm, could have prevented me, the moment I received your Ladyship's elegant present by Mrs. Miller,† from returning you my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments. I assure your Ladyship, I shall set it apart—the symbols of Religion shall only be more sacred. In the moment of poetic composition, the box shall be my inspiring genius. When I would breathe the comprehensive wish of benevolence for the happiness of

* Several of the author's favorite sentiments are expressed through the medium of this humorous letter, which in style reminds one of some of Goldsmith's essays. The reader may remember that in former parts of this correspondence, Professor Dugald Stewart and Bishop Geddes are complimented by Burns, as having been the sole instances of manhood he ever met, who "value the several actors in the great drama of life precisely as they play their parts."

† The present referred to was a valuable snuff-box, containing on the lid a beautiful inlaid miniature of Queen Mary, which unfortunately was irreparably damaged in India while in the possession of one of the poet's sons.

others, I shall recollect your Ladyship; when I would interest my fancy in the distresses incident to humanity, I shall remember the unfortunate Mary. I enclose your Ladyship a poetic compliment I lately paid to the memory of our greatly injured, lovely Scottish Queen.*—I have the honor to be, my Lady, your Ladyship's highly obliged and ever devoted, humble servant, ROBT BURNS.

ELLISLAND, NEAR DUMFRIES, 25*th April* 1791.

POEMS WRITTEN BY MR. ROBERT BURNS,

AND SELECTED BY HIM FROM HIS UNPRINTED COLLECTION, FOR ROBERT RIDDELL, OF GLENRIDDELL, ESQ.

PREFACE.

As this collection almost wholly consists of pieces local, or unfinished fragments — the effusion of a poetical moment, and bagatelles strung in rhyme simply *pour passer le temps*, the Author trusts that nobody into whose hands it may come, will, without his permission, give, or allow to be taken, copies of anything here contained; much less to give to the world at large, what he never meant should see the light. At the Gentleman's request, whose from this time it shall be, the Collection was made; and to him, and I will add, to his amiable Lady, it is presented as a sincere though small tribute of gratitude for the many happy hours the Author has spent under their roof. *There*, what Poverty, even though accompanied with

* The holograph of this letter is in the Hastie collection at the British Museum. Dr. Currie withheld the closing words, through what motive it is difficult to conjecture; but the omission misled Allan Cunningham into the blunder of saying that the poem called "The Lament of Mary Queen of Scots" was composed at the request of Lady Constable, who rewarded him for it, by presenting the beautiful box referred to. The reverse of this seems to have been the order of cause and effect.

Genius, must seldom expect to meet with at the tables and in the circles of Fashionable Life, his welcome has ever been the cordiality of kindness and the warmth of Friendship. As from the situation in which it is now placed, this MS. may be preserved, and this Preface read, when the hand that now writes, and the heart that now dictates it, may be mouldering in the dust; let these be regarded as the genuine sentiments of a man who seldom flattered any, and never those he loved. ROBT. BURNS.

27th April 1791.

The whole of the poems, songs, and fragments embraced in the above MS. collection, have now been published — the more important of these having been printed by the Author himself in his enlarged edition of February 1793. In 1874, Henry A. Bright, Esq., Merchant, Liverpool, produced a small quarto volume, printed for private circulation, giving some account of the Glenriddell manuscripts, embracing a complete list of them, and copies of any that then remained unpublished. He executed his generous undertaking with rare taste; and to him we are thankfully beholden for the use of his labors in the present work.

The volume which contains those manuscript poems, and also a companion volume of letters, appear to have been handed back to Burns after the death of Mr. Riddell in April 1794; and when Dr. Currie undertook to edit the great Liverpool edition of our author's works for the benefit of his widow and family, the volumes were lodged with him as part of his materials.

Mr. Bright records that in 1853 the widow of Mr. Wallace Currie (son of Dr. Currie, the poet's biographer), presented to the Athenæum Library, at Liverpool, those two interesting volumes; but that down to 1873 they were so carefully preserved in a locked chest, that very few even of the proprietors of the Library knew of their existence. At his suggestion, they were placed within a glass case in the library, for inspection of the public, subject to the regulations of the institution.

At a future stage of this work we shall give some account of the Prose volume referred to.

(*) TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, OF ULBSTER, BART.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ELLISLAND, 1791.

SIR,—The following circumstance has, I believe, been omitted in the statistical account, transmitted to you, of the parish of Dunscore, in Nithsdale. I beg leave to send it to you, because it is new and may be useful. How far it is deserving of a place in your patriotic publication, you are the best judge.

To store the minds of the lower classes with useful knowledge, is certainly of great importance, both to them as individuals, and to society at large. Giving them a turn for reading and reflection, is giving them a source of innocent and laudable amusement; and besides raises them to a more dignified degree in the scale of rationality. Impressed with this idea, a gentleman in this parish, Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, set on foot a species of circulating library, on a plan so simple as to be practicable in any corner of the country; and so useful, as to deserve the notice of every country gentleman, who thinks the improvement of that part of his own species, whom chance has thrown into the humble walks of the peasant and the artisan, a matter worthy of his attention.

Mr. Riddell got a number of his own tenants, and farming neighbors, to form themselves into a society for the purpose of having a library among themselves. They entered into a legal engagement to abide by it for three years; with a saving clause or two, in case of removal to a distance, or of death. Each member, at his entry, paid five shillings: and at each of their meetings, which were held every fourth Saturday, sixpence more. With their entry-money, and the credit which they took on the faith of their future

funds, they laid in a tolerable stock of books at the commencement. What authors they were to purchase, was always decided by the majority. At every meeting, all the books, under certain fines and forfeitures, by way of penalty, were to be produced; and the members had their choice of the volumes in rotation. He whose name stood for that night, first on the list, had his choice of what volume he pleased in the whole collection; the second had his choice after the first; the third after the second, and so on to the last. At next meeting, he who had been first on the list at the preceding meeting, was last at this; he who had been second was first; and so on through the whole three years. At the expiration of the engagement, the books were sold by auction, but only among the members themselves; and each man had his share of the common stock, in money or in books, as he chose to be a purchaser or not.

At the breaking up of this little society, which was formed under Mr. Riddell's patronage, what with benefactions of books from him, and what with their own purchases, they had collected together upwards of one hundred and fifty volumes. It will easily be guessed, that a good deal of trash would be bought. Among the books, however, of this little library, were, *Blair's Sermons*, *Robertson's History of Scotland*, *Hume's History of the Stewarts*, *The Spectator*, *Idler*, *Adventurer*, *Mirror*, *Lounger*, *Observer*, *Man of Feeling*, *Man of the World*, *Chrysal*, *Don Quixote*, *Joseph Andrews*, *&c.* A peasant who can read, and enjoy such books, is certainly a much superior being to his neighbor, who perhaps stalks beside his team, very little removed, except in shape, from the brutes he drives.

Wishing your patriotic exertions their so much merited success,—I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A PEASANT.*

* The above is extracted from the third volume of Sir John Sinclair's Statistics.

TO ——————.

(CURRIE, 1801.)

[ELLISLAND, 1791.]

DEAR SIR,—I am exceedingly to blame in not writing you long ago; but the truth is, that I am the most indolent of all human beings, and when I matriculate in the Herald's Office, I intend that my supporters shall be two sloths; my crest, a slow-worm; and the motto, "Deil tak' the foremost." So much by way of apology for not thanking you sooner for your kind execution of my commission.

I would have sent you the poem; but somehow or other it found its way into the public paper, where you must have seen it.*

* * * * *

I am ever, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

ROBERT BURNS.

TO (PROBABLY) WM. NICOL,

OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

THOU Eunuch of language: thou Englishman, who never was south of the Tweed: thou servile echo of

---

p. 598.—It was enclosed to Sir John by Mr. Riddell himself in the following letter, also printed there:—"SIR JOHN—I enclose you a letter written by Mr. Burns, as an addition to the account of Dunscore parish. It contains an account of a small library which he was so good (at my desire) as to set on foot, in the barony of Monkland (or Friar's Carse), in this parish. As its utility has been felt, particularly among the younger class of people, I think, that if a similar plan were established, in the different parishes of Scotland, it would tend greatly to the speedy improvement of the tenantry, trades people, and work people. Mr. Burns was so good as to take the whole charge of this small concern. He was treasurer, librarian, and censor, to this little society, who will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit and exertions for their improvement and information.

"I have the honor to be, Sir John, yours most sincerely, ROBERT RIDDELL."

* It is supposed that the poem here referred to was the "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots." If so, the date would be about May 1791.

fashionable barbarisms: thou quack, vending the nostrums of empirical elocution: thou marriage-maker between vowels and consonants, on the Gretna-green of caprice: thou cobbler, botching the flimsy socks of bombast oratory: thou blacksmith, hammering the rivets of absurdity: thou butcher, embruing thy hands in the bowels of orthography: thou arch-heretic in pronunciation: thou pitch-pipe of affected emphasis: thou carpenter, mortising the awkward joints of jarring sentences: thou squeaking dissonance of cadence: thou pimp of gender: thou Lyon Herald to silly etymology: thou antipode of grammar: thou executioner of construction: thou brood of the speech-distracting builders of the Tower of Babel: thou lingual confusion worse confounded: thou scape-gallows from the land of syntax: thou scavenger of mood and tense: thou murderous accoucheur of infant learning: thou *ignus fatuus*, misleading the steps of benighted ignorance: thou pickle-herring in the puppet-show of nonsense: thou faithful recorder of barbarous idiom: thou persecutor of syllabication: thou baleful meteor, foretelling and facilitating the rapid approach of Nox and Erebus.*

(1) TO MR. JOHN SOMERVILLE, WRITER, EDINBURGH.

(Douglas, 1877.)

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 11*th May* 1791.

Allow me, my dear Sir, to introduce a Mr. Lorimer, a particular friend of mine, to your acquaintance, as a

* This singular composition made its appearance in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August 1832, without date or signature. The original MS. was in the possession of Mr. Andrew Henderson, Surgeon, Berwick-upon-Tweed, one of the sons of Mrs. Henderson of Jedburgh, daughter of Mr. Wm. Cruikshank, High School, Edinburgh.

gentleman worth your knowing, both as a man and (what is case in point), as a man of property and consequence, who goes to town just now, to advise with and employ an Agent in some law-business. By way of serving him, I put him in the best hands when I introduce him to Mr. Somerville. My kindest compliments to Mrs. Somerville, little Harry, and all your little folks. By the way, about ten months ago, I collected * * * * a little fellow, whom, for strength, size, figure, and pitch of note, I will match against any boy in Nithsdale, Annandale, or any dale whatever. So, in a mug of porter, here goes the Gudewife o' Diltammies' toast—"The Gudeman an' the bill! for they keep a' the toun in milk." Yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

The above curious fragment we print from a newspaper cutting of unknown date; a footnote intimates that the seal of the letter is of black wax, bearing the impression of a heart transpierced by two cross arrows, and explains in reference to the portion represented by asterisks that "our compositor either cannot or will not make it out."

The gentleman to whom the letter is addressed has already been introduced to the reader in the poet's letter to Peter Hill, page 241 *supra*. Here we have the earliest reference to the Lorimer family which occurs in the bard's correspondence. His intercourse with them began when he commenced his excise practice near the close of 1789. The eldest daughter, Jean (born in 1775), who was destined to become the "Chloris" of Burns, was then bursting into precocious womanhood. Already had her charms prompted his muse to make her the subject of a song in which he vicariously wooed her for a brother exciseman; and the names "Jean Lorimer" and "John Gillespie" were engraved on the window panes at Ellisland. The ingenious reader will be at small loss to unriddle the mysterious allusions in the latter part of the above fragment. They undoubtedly refer to the conception and birth of William Nicol Burns, the poet's third son, who first saw daylight about one month prior to the date of this communication to Somerville. Thus—Tristram Shandy-like—the history of Colonel William

Nicol Burns begins nine months before his birth-date in the calendar!

The black seal on the letter, with its symbolic impression, is also pregnant with meaning. No single love affection was capable of filling the heart of Burns; although in his poetic rapture of 1786, when Jean deserted him, he asserted otherwise—

> "This breast, how dreary now and void,
> For her too scanty once of room."

Precisely nine days prior to the birth spoken of in the letter to Mr. Somerville, the poet's "Anna of the gowden-locks" was delivered of a daughter who, a few weeks after birth, was conveyed to Ellisland by pre-arrangement, and there suckled at the same breast which fed the stout infant boy above referred to. Of all Burns's children, this second "dear-bought Bess" (for the mother's life was the cost of that birth) the most resembled him in features. To this subject, Robert Chambers has devoted a page or two of generous pleading in behalf of Burns, in which the leading defence is a reflection on Jean's alleged imprudence in absenting herself from the domestic couch during one or more prolonged visits to Ayrshire. Alas! where there is a will there is a way Mrs. Burns was certainly not in Ayrshire, or beyond her husband's reach, in June and July 1790, nor was she absent from Ellisland at any time before the summer of 1791, so far as appears from the records laid before the public by the poet's biographers.* To countenance his statement, Chambers quotes an alleged saying of the poet's sister Agnes, who superintended the dairy department at Ellisland for a short period:—"I never knew my brother fail to keep good hours at night until Jean's first unlucky absence in Ayrshire." The reader must here be given to understand that this sagacious sister of Burns was the identical "Nannie" of whom another saying is quoted:—"I wonder what gars our Robert make such a wark about the lasses! For my part, I wad na gie ae lad for half a dizen o' them."

---

*Jean's first summer at Ellisland was that of 1789, when her son Francis Wallace was born. That event happened in August, and she was attended by the poet's mother, who journeyed to Dumfriesshire for the occasion. Jean was not absent in October thereafter, when the verses to "Mary in Heaven" were composed. The correspondence shews her to have remained at Ellisland during the first half of 1790, and during the latter half her presence there is fully certified, by the accounts of summer visitors, followed by her own description of Burns, while in the act of composing "Tam O'Shanter."

(2) TO MR. ALEX. FINDLATER, SUPERVISOR OF EXCISE.

(DR. WADDELL'S ED., 1869.)*

[ELLISLAND, *June*, 1791.]

DEAR SIR,—I am both much surprised and vexed at that accident of Lorimer's stock. The last survey I made prior to Mr. Lorimer's going to Edinburgh, I was very particular in my inspection, and the quantity was certainly in his possession, as I stated it. The surveys I made during his absence might as well have been marked "Key absent," as I never found any body but the lady, who I know is not mistress of keys, &c., to know anything of it, and one of the times, it would have rejoiced all Hell to have seen her so drunk. I have not surveyed there since his return. I know the gentleman's ways are, like the grace of G—, past all comprehension; but I shall give the house a severe scrutiny to-morrow morning, and send you in the naked facts.

I know, Sir, and regret deeply that this business glances with a malign aspect on my character as an officer; but as I am really innocent in the affair, and as the gentleman is known to be an illicit dealer, and particularly as this is the *single* instance of the least shadow of carelessness or impropriety in my conduct as an officer, I shall be peculiarly unfortunate if my character shall fall a sacrifice to the dark manœuvres of a smuggler. I am, Sir, your obliged and obedient humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

Sunday even.

* This undated letter was first made known in its entire form at Dumfries, by the Secretary of the Burns Club there, in 1869. Mr. Findlater had printed the second paragraph in 1814.

I send you some rhymes I have just finished which tickle my fancy a little.

The above picture of a smuggler's house at Cairnmill, Kemishall, forms a strange comment on the poet's character of the man, in the immediately preceding letter, addressed to Mr. Somerville—"a gentleman worth your knowing, both as a man, and as a man of property and consequence!" It is said that eventually he was engulphed in bankruptcy; but we have evidence that Mr. and Mrs. Burns continued to be on the most intimate terms with him and his eldest daughter till within a year of the poet's death. Mrs. Burns, in her conversations with Mr. M'Diarmid, thus speaks of the family:—"Jean Lorimer was the daughter of Wm. Lorimer, farmer at Kemishall, and in good circumstances. He had two daughters and three sons. His wife was given to drinking, and that injured her daughters. Jean used to visit at Ellisland; she had remarkably fair hair, and was perfectly virtuous. She took the fancy of an Englishman at a Moffat Ball, and was married to him at Gretna Green. The man was a reprobate; but his mother allowed her an annuity." Chambers gives the date of that marriage as being March 1793.

(8) TO ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., EDINBURGH,

INTRODUCING CLARKE THE SCHOOLMASTER.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

11th June, 1791.

Let me interest you, my dear Cunningham, in behalf of the gentleman who gives you this. He is a Mr. Clarke, of Moffat, principal schoolmaster there, and is at present suffering severely under the persecution of one or two powerful individuals of his employers. He is accused of harshness to some perverse dunces that were placed under his care. God help the teacher, if a man of genius and sensibility, for such is my friend Clarke—when a blockhead father presents him his booby son, and insists on having the

rays of science lighted up in a fellow's head whose skull is impervious and inaccessible, by any other way than a positive fracture with a cudgel : a fellow whom in fact it savors of impiety to attempt making a scholar of, as he has been marked a blockhead in the book of fate, at the almighty fiat of his Creator.

The patrons of Moffat School are, the ministers, magistrates, and town-council of Edinburgh, and as the business comes now before them, let me beg my dearest friend to do every thing in his power to serve the interests of a man of genius, a man of worth, and a man whom I particularly respect and esteem. You know some good fellows among the magistrates and council, though, God knows, 'tis generally a very unfit soil for good fellowship to flourish in, but particularly you have much to say with a reverend gentleman to whom you have the honor of being very nearly related, and whom this country and age have had the honor to produce. I need not name the historian of Charles V.* I tell him through the medium of his nephew's influence, that Mr. Clarke is a gentleman who will not disgrace even his patronization. I know the merits of the cause thoroughly, and I say it, that my friend is falling a sacrifice to prejudiced ignorance, and envious, causeless malice.

God help the children of dependence! Hated and persecuted by their enemies, and too often (alas! almost unexceptionally always) received by their friends with insulting disrespect and heart-stinging reproach, under the thin disguise of cold civility and humiliating advice. O! to be a sturdy savage, stalking in the pride of his independence, amid the solitary wilds of his deserts ; rather than in civilized life, helplessly to tremble for a subsistence, precarious as the caprice of a fellow-creature! Every man has his

* Dr. Robertson, the historian, was Cunningham's uncle.

virtues, and no man is without his failings; and curse on that privileged plain-dealing of friendship, which, in the hour of my calamity, cannot reach forth the helping hand without at the same time pointing out those failings, and assigning their share in my present distress. My friends, for such the world calls you, and such ye think yourselves to be, pass by my virtues if you please, but do also spare my follies: the first will witness in my breast for themselves, and the last will give pain enough to the ingenuous mind without you. And since deviating more or less from the paths of propriety and rectitude must be incident to human nature, do thou, Fortune, put it in my power, always from my own pocket, to pay the penalty of those errors! I do not want to be independent that I may sin, but I want to be independent in my sinning.

To return in this rambling letter to the subject I set out with, let me recommend my friend Clarke to your acquaintance and good offices; his worth entitles him to the one, and his gratitude will merit the other. R. B.

The variations in our text from Currie's version of the above letter are taken from the Glenriddell MS. Chambers remarks concerning it, that "there is a condition of great suffering when, though the main source of grief cannot be spoken of, smaller evils will be denounced with a superfluity of splenetic effusion not a little startling to a bystander." Burns here, while merely sympathizing with a persecuted schoolmaster, launches out into an indignant protest against the friendship which would venture to preach against a man's errors or failings, while kindly endeavoring to redeem their consequences. The exasperation of spirit and occasional acrimony which his letters manifest again and again, from this period of his career, seem to have been caused more by the reckless violence of his own passions, with their bitter after-fruits, than from disappointed ambition or social disregard of any kind. The cause of his unfortunate friend Clarke he seems to have taken up as a pet subject, as will be evinced from several hitherto suppressed letters on that topic now here made public.

(?) TO THE REV. WILLIAM MOODIE, EDINBURGH.*

(DOUGLAS 1877.)

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—This will be presented to you by a particular friend of mine, a Mr. Clarke, schoolmaster in Moffat, who has lately become the unfortunate and undeserved subject of persecution from some of his employers. The ostensible and assigned reason on their part is some instances of severity to the boys under his care; but I have had the best means of knowing the merits of the cause, and I assure you, Sir, that he is falling a sacrifice to the weakness of the many, following in the cry of the villainy of the few.

The business will now come before the patrons of the school, who are the ministers, magistrates, and town council of Edinburgh; and in that view I would interest your goodness in his behalf. 'Tis true, Sir, and I feel the full force of the observation, that a man in my powerless, humble situation very much mistakes himself, and very much mistakes the way of the world, when he dares presume to offer influence among so highly respectable a body as the patronage I have mentioned. On that —what could I do? A man of abilities, a man of genius, a man of worth, and my friend—before I would stand quietly and silently by, and see him perish thus, I would go down on my knees to the rocks and mountains, and implore them to fall on his persecutors and crush their malice and them in deserved destruction. Believe me, Sir, he is a greatly injured man.

---

*This clergyman was translated from Kirkcaldy to St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, in 1787, while Burns resided in the city and became acquainted with him. In 1793, he was appointed Professor of Hebrew and the Eastern languages. He died in 1812, and was succeeded in the Professorship by the celebrated Dr. Murray.

The humblest individual, though, alas, he cannot so redress the wrong, may yet as ably attest the fact as a lord might do. Mr. Moodie's goodness I well know, and that acquaintance with him that I have the honor to boast of will forgive my addressing him thus in favor of a gentleman whom, if he knew as well, he would esteem as I do. R. B.

LETTER DICTATED FOR CLARKE, ADDRESSED TO THE LORD PROVOST OF EDINBURGH.

(Douglas,* 1877.)

My Lord,—It may be deemed presumption in a man obscure and unknown as I am, and entire stranger to your Lordship, to trouble you in this manner; but when I inform you that the subject on which I address you is of the last importance to me, and is so far connected with you, that on your determination, in a great measure, my fate must depend, I rely on your Lordship's goodness that you will think any farther apology unnecessary.

I have been for nearly five years Schoolmaster in Moffat, an appointment of which your Lordship will know, you, with the rest of the Magistracy and Town Council, together with the Clergy of Edinburgh, have the patronage. The trust with which these, my highly respectable patrons had honored me, I have endeavored to discharge with the utmost fidelity, and I hope with a good degree of success; but of late, one or two powerful individuals† of my employers

* This letter is inserted in the Glenriddell MS. volume at Liverpool, with a heading by our bard, thus:—"The following letter, which was sent by Mr. Clarke to the Provost of Edinburgh, was of my writing."

† The "one or two powerful individuals" referred to seem to have enlisted the sympathies of the Earl of Hopetoun, who, as superior of the ground on which the school stood, or by some other influence, during the summer vacation, applied to the court for an interdict against Clarke's re-opening it.

have been pleased to attack my reputation as a Teacher, have threatened no less than to expel me from the School, and are taking every method, some of them, I will say it, insidious and unfair to the last degree, to put their threats in execution. The fault of which I am accused is some instances of severity to the children under my care. Were I to tell your Lordship that I am innocent of the charge—that any shade of cruelty, particularly that very black one of cruelty to tender infancy, will be allowed by every unbiassed person who knows anything of me to be tints unknown in my disposition; you would certainly look on all this *from me* as words of course; so I shall trouble you with nothing on the merits of my cause, until I have a fair hearing before my R^t^. Hon^ble^. Patrons. A fair hearing, my Lord, is what above all things I want; and what I greatly fear will be attempted to be denied me. It is to be insinuated that I have vacated my place, that I never was legally appointed, with I know not how many pretences more, to hinder the business from coming properly before your Lordship and the other Patrons of the School—all which I deny, and will insist on holding my appointment until the dignified characters who gave it me shall find me unworthy of it.

In your Lordship's great acquaintance with human life, you must have known and seen many instances of Innocence, nay, of Merit, disguised and obscured, and sometimes for ever buried, by the dark machinations of unprincipled Malevolence, and envious Craft; and until the contrary be made to appear, 'tis at least equally probable that my case is in that unfortunate and undeserved predicament.—I have the honor to be, &c. (Signed) JAMES CLARKE.

[MOFFAT, *June* 1791.]

(9) TO JOHN MITCHELL, ESQ.,

COLLECTOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

[ELLISLAND, *16th June* 1791.]

SIR,—A very pressing occasion, no less than witnessing the wedding of an only brother, calls me to Ayrshire, for which I shall take your permission as granted, except I be countermanded before Sunday, the day I set out. I shall remember that three days are all that I can expect. The enclosed official paper came to my hand, and I take the liberty to lay it before you.—I have the honor to be your obliged, humble servt. ROBT. BURNS.

Mr. Gilbert Burns, farmer, then of Mossgiel, was married to Miss Jean Breckenridge at Kilmarnock on 21st June 1791. The eldest child of the marriage, William Burns, who was born at Mossgiel on 15th May 1792, is now (1878) alive at Portarlington in Ireland. A younger brother, Gilbert, long a member of the large dry goods house of Todd & Burns (1880) born in 1803, also survives in Dublin. A sister, Anne Burns, born in 1805 is also still alive; and these are all that remain of eleven children, the issue of the marriage referred to in the poet's letter.

Gilbert, the poet's brother, died in April 1827, and his wife in September, 1841.

(10) TO MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

[*June*, 1791.]†

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I take Glenriddell's kind offer of a corner for a postscript to you, though I have got

* The poet's holograph of this short letter is in possession of D. Lyell, Esq., W.S., Edinburgh, to whom we are indebted for its use.

† The original letter preserved in Mr. Hill's family has no date in the poet's

nothing particular to tell you. It is with the greatest pleasure I learn from all hands, and particularly from your warm friend and patron, the Laird here, that you are going on, spreading and thriving like a Palm tree that shades the fragrant vale in the Holy Land of the Prophet. May the richest juices from beneath, and the dews of heaven from above, foster your root and refresh your branches, until you be as conspicuous among your fellows as the stately Goliah towering over the little pigmy Philistines around him! Amen! so be it!!! ROBT. BURNS.

(1) TO MISS DAVIES,

ENCLOSING A BALLAD MADE UPON HER.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

[*Aug.* 1791.]

MADAM,—I understand my very worthy neighbor, Mr. Riddell, has informed you that I have made you the subject of some verses. There is something [so provoking]* in the idea of being the burden of a ballad that I do not think Job or Moses, though such patterns of patience and meekness, could have resisted the curiosity to know what that ballad was; so my worthy friend (what I daresay he never intended) has done me a mischief, and reduced me to the unfortunate alternative of leaving your curiosity ungratified, or else disgusting you with foolish verses, the unfinished production of a random moment, and never meant to have met your ear. I have heard or read somewhere of a gentleman who had some genius,

---

hand; it bears the Dumfries Post-mark "June," but the year is invisible. It is backed in Glenriddell's hand.

*These two words, not in the original, have been inserted by former editors to help the author's meaning.

much eccentricity, and very considerable dexterity with his pencil. In the accidental groups of social life into which one is thrown, whenever this gentleman met with a character in a more than ordinary degree congenial to his soul, he used to steal a sketch of the face, merely, he said, as a *nota bene*, to point out the agreeable recollection to his memory. What this gentleman's pencil was to him, is my muse to me; and the enclosed verses I do myself the honor to send you are a *memento* exactly of the same kind. It may be more owing to the fastidiousness of my caprice than the delicacy of my taste; but I am so often tired, disgusted, and hurt with the insipidity, affectation, and pride of mankind, that when I meet with a person, "after my own heart," I positively feel what an orthodox Protestant would call a species of idolatry, which acts on my fancy like inspiration; and I can no more desist rhyming on the impulse, than an Æolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air. A distich or two would be the consequence, though the object which hit my fancy were grey-bearded wrinkled age; but where my theme is youth and beauty, a young lady whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment are equally striking and unaffected—by Heavens! though I had lived three score years a married man, and three score years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea: and I am truly sorry that the enclosed stanzas have done such poor justice to such a subject.—I have the honor to be, &c. R. B.

The above closes the volume of the author's letters transcribed for Captain Riddell, and unfortunately bears no date. Dr. Currie had either considered it unworthy of publication, or felt that by printing another letter addressed to the same lady (that which we next present), he had given sufficient prominence to so minor a heroine of the poet. The ballad enclosed was evidently the lively jingling piece given at page

38, *supra*, each verse of which introduces an eccentric rhyme to correspond with "the charms of lovely Davies," celebrated in the closing line of every stanza. The other song, "Bonie wee thing, cannie wee thing," which this interesting young lady inspired, has become very popular, as well through its own merits, as from its good fortune to be united to one of the most charming of the Scottish melodies. The reader will find all that requires to be said about the story of Miss Deborah Davies in a note at page 39. The charming sentimental song just referred to was enclosed in the following carefully composed letter. The use which Carlyle made of the passage in inverted commas about "ascending the rock Independence," will here occur to the reader who is familiar with that author's famous review of Lockhart's *Life of Burns*.

(?) TO MISS DAVIES,

ENCLOSING A SONG INSPIRED BY HER CHARMS.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[*Aug.* 1791.]

IT is impossible, Madam, that the generous warmth and angelic purity of your youthful mind can have any idea of that moral disease under which I unhappily must rank as the chief of sinners; I mean a torpitude of the moral powers, that may be called a lethargy of conscience. In vain Remorse rears her horrent crest, and rouses all her snakes: beneath the deadly fixed eye and leaden hand of Indolence, their wildest ire is charmed into the torpor of the bat, slumbering out the rigors of winter in the chink of a ruined wall. Nothing less, Madam, could have made me so long neglect your obliging commands. Indeed I had one apology—the bagatelle was not worth presenting. Besides, so strongly am I interested in Miss Davies's fate and welfare in the serious business of life, amid its chances and changes, that to make her the subject of a silly ballad, is downright mockery of

these ardent feelings; 'tis like an impertinent jest to a dying friend.

Gracious Heaven! why this disparity between our wishes and our powers? Why is the most generous wish to make others blest impotent and ineffectual as the idle breeze that crosses the pathless desert? In my walks of life I have met with a few people to whom how gladly would I have said—"Go, be happy! I know that your hearts have been wounded by the scorn of the proud, whom accident has placed above you—or worse still, in whose hands are, perhaps, placed many of the comforts of your life. But there! ascend that rock, Independence, and look justly down on their littleness of soul. Make the worthless tremble under your indignation, and the foolish sink before your contempt; and largely impart that happiness to others, which, I am certain, will give yourselves so much pleasure to bestow!"

Why, dear Madam, must I wake from this delightful reverie, and find it all a dream? Why, amid my generous enthusiasm, must I find myself poor and powerless, incapable of wiping one tear from the eye of pity, or of adding one comfort to the friend I love!—Out upon the world! say I, that its affairs are administered so ill. They talk of reform: good Heaven! what a reform would I make among the sons, and even the daughters of men! Down immediately should go fools from the high places where misbegotten chance has perked them up, and through life should they skulk, ever haunted by their native insignificance, as the body marches accompanied by its shadow. As for a much more formidable class, the knaves, I am at a loss what to do with them: had I a world, there should not be a knave in it, ... But the hand that could give, I would liberally fill: and I would pour delight on the heart that could kindly forgive, and generously love.

Still the inequalities of life are, among men, comparatively tolerable; but there is a delicacy, a tenderness, accompanying every view in which we can place lovely Woman, that are grated and shocked at the rude, capricious distinctions of Fortune. Woman is the blood-royal of life: let there be slight degrees of precedency among them—but let them be ALL sacred. Whether this last sentiment be right or wrong, I am not accountable: it is an original component feature of my mind. . . . . R. B.

(?) TO MR. THOMAS SLOAN.*

CARE OF WM. KENNEDY, ESQ., MANCHESTER.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

MY DEAR SLOAN,—Suspense is worse than disappointment; for that reason I hurry to tell you that I just now learn that Mr. Ballantine does not choose to interfere more in the business. I am truly sorry for it, but cannot help it.

You blame me for not writing you sooner; but you will please to recollect that you omitted one little necessary piece of information—your address.

However, you know equally well my hurried life, indolent temper, and strength of attachment. It must be a longer period than the longest life "in the world's hale and undegenerate days" that will make me forget so dear a friend as Mr. Sloan. I am prodigal enough at times, but I will not part with such a treasure as that.

I can easily enter into the *embarras* of your present

* The MS. of this letter is now preserved within the poet's Monument at Edinburgh. Mr. Sloan was a native of Wanlockhead, with whom Burns formed an acquaintance during his frequent journeys in 1788 and 1789, between Ellisland and Ayrshire.

situation. You know my favorite quotation from Young—

"——— on reason build resolve—
That column of true majesty in man!"

and that other favorite one from Thomson's *Alfred*—

"What proves the hero truly great,
Is never, never to despair."

Or, shall I quote you an author of your acquaintance?

"For whether doing, SUFFERING, or FORBEARING
You may do miracles by—PERSEVERING."

I have nothing new to tell you. The few friends we have are going on in the old way. I sold my crop on this day se'ennight past, and sold it very well. A guinea an acre, on an average, above value. But such a scene of drunkenness was hardly ever seen in this country. After the roup was over, about thirty people engaged in a battle, every man for his own hand, and fought it out for three hours. Nor was the scene much better in the house. No fighting indeed, but folks lying drunk on the floor, and decanting until both my dogs got so drunk by attending them, that they could not stand. You will easily guess how I enjoyed the scene; as I was no farther over than you used to see me.

Mrs. B. and family have been in Ayrshire these many weeks.

Farewell! and God bless you, my dear friend!

ROBT. BURNS.

ELLISLAND, *1st September*, 1791.

(*) TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[*Sep.* 1791.]

MY LORD,—Language sinks under the ardor of my feelings when I would thank your Lordship for the honor you have done me in inviting me to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson. In my first enthusiasm, in reading the card you did me the honor to write me, I overlooked every obstacle, and determined to go; but I fear it will not be in my power. A week or two's absence, in the very middle of my harvest, is what I much doubt I dare not venture on.

Your Lordship hints at an ode for the occasion: but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired. I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your Lordship with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am to the task. However, it affords me an opportunity of approaching your Lordship, and declaring how sincerely and gratefully I have the honor to be, &c. R. B.

The above letter enclosed our poet's "Address to the shade of Thomson," given at page 68, *supra*. The Earl had invited Burns "to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson, on Ednam Hill, on the 22d of September, for which occasion perhaps his muse may inspire a suitable Ode."

In a reply, dated 16th September, the Earl informs Burns that his "Address" had been well received by the public, and suggests "Harvest Home" as a subject for his future musings; but recommends him to write in English, rather than in a "dialect which admits of no elegance or dignity of expression." Such a subject, he adds, "would furnish you with an amiable opportunity of perpetuating the names of Glencairn, Miller, and your other eminent benefactors; which,

from what I know of your spirit and have seen of your poems and letters, will not deviate from the chastity of praise that it is so uniformly united to true taste and genius."

(?) TO JAMES GRACIE, ESQ., BANKER.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

GLOBE INN, 8 o'clock p.m. [1791.]

SIR,—I have yours anent Crombie's bill.* Your forbearance has been very great. I did it to accommodate the thoughtless fellow. He asks till Wednesday week. If he fail, I pay it myself. In the meantime, if horning and caption be absolutely necessary, grip him by the neck, and welcome. Yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

A LETTER FOR MR. CLARKE TO SEND TO MR. WILLIAMSON,†

FACTOTUM AND FAVORITE TO THE EARL OF HOPETOUN.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

[ELLISLAND, *Sep.* 1791.]

SIR,—Most sincerely do I regret that concurrence of accident, prejudice, and mistake, which, most unfortunately for me, has subjected me, as master of Moffat Grammar School, to the displeasure of the Earl of Hopetoun, and those in whom he places confidence. Protestations of my innocence will, from me, be thought words of course. But I hope, and I think I

* This defaulter was a mason at Dalswinton, who had been employed in building the poet's new house at Ellisland, and had been paid for his work.

† Died at Edinburgh, 12th July 1805, Alexander Williamson of Balgray, Esq., many years factor to the Earl of Hopetoun.—*Scots Mag.*

have some well-grounded reasons for that hope, that the gentlemen in whose hands I immediately am, the Right Hon. Patrons of the School, will find the charge against me groundless, and my claims just: and will not allow me to fall a sacrifice to the insidious designs of some, and the well-meant, though misinformed zeal of others. However, as disputes and litigations must be of great hurt, both to the School and me, I most ardently wish that it would suggest itself to Mr. Williamson's good sense and wish for the welfare of the country, the propriety of dropping all disputes, and allowing me peaceable admission to my school and the exercise of my function. This, Sir, I am persuaded, will be serving all parties; and will lay *me* under particular and lasting obligations to your goodness. I propose opening my School to-morrow; and the quiet possession of my school-house is what I have to request of you—a request which, if refused, I must be under the very disagreeable necessity of asking in the way pointed out by the laws of the country. Whatever you, Sir, may think of other parts of my conduct, you will at least grant the propriety of a man's straining every nerve in a contest, where not only Ruin but Infamy must attend his defeat. I am, &c. (Signed) JAMES CLARKE.*

THE AFTON LODGE MANUSCRIPTS.

(McKEE, 1869.)

IN the latter portion of 1791 the beautiful set of manuscripts presented by Burns to Mrs. Stewart of Afton (enumerated at page 66, *supra*), seem to have been forwarded with the following note prefixed to them:—

Many verses, on which an author would by no

* This subject is resumed under dates Jan. and Feb. 1792. Burns, under his transcript of the present letter in the Glenriddell collection, writes these words, "Bravo! Clarke. In spite of Hopetoun and his myrmidons, thou camest off victorious."

means rest his reputation in print, may yet amuse an idle moment in manuscript; and many Poems, from the locality of the subject, may be uninteresting, or unintelligible to those who are strangers to that locality. Most of, if not all, the following Poems are in one or other of those predicaments, and the author begs whoever into whose hands they may fall, that they will do him the justice not to publish what he himself thought proper to suppress. R. B.

[ELLISLAND, *Oct.* 1791.]

(') TO MR. CORBET, SUPERVISOR-GENERAL OF EXCISE.*

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

[*Oct. 1791.*]

SIR,—I have in my time taken up the pen on several ticklish subjects, but none that ever cost me half so much as the language of supplication. To lay open one's wants and woes to the mercy of another's benevolence, is a business so prostituted by the worthless and unfeeling, that a man of principle and delicacy shrinks from it as from contamination.

Mr. Findlater tells me that you wish to know from myself what are my views in desiring to exchange my excise division. With the wish natural to man of bettering his present situation, I have turned my thoughts towards the practicability of getting into a port division. As I know that the general superiors are omnipotent in these matters, my honored friend Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop offered me to interest you in my behalf.

She told me that she was well acquainted with Mrs. Corbet's goodness, and that, on the score of former

* The name of this gentleman is first mentioned in the poet's letter to Mrs. Dunlop, of Nov. 1790. The present letter is taken from the Glenriddell MS. Book at Liverpool.

intimacy, she thought she could promise some influence with her, and added, with her usual sagacity and knowledge of human nature, that the surest road to the good offices of a man was through the mediation of the woman he loved. On this footing, Sir, I venture my application, else not even the known generosity of your character would have emboldened me to address you thus.—I have the honor to be, &c.

R. B.

(1) TO COL. FULLARTON OF FULLARTON.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL'S ED., 1835.)

SIR,—I have just this minute got the frank, and next minute must send it to post, else I purposed to have sent you two or three other bagatelles that might have amused a vacant hour about as well as "Six excellent new songs" or "The Aberdeen Prognostications for the year to come." I shall probably trouble you soon with another packet. About the "gloomy month of November, when the people of England hang and drown themselves," any thing generally is better than one's own thoughts.

Fond as I may be of my own productions, it is not for their sake that I am so anxious to send you them. I am ambitious, covetously ambitious of being known to a gentleman whom I am proud to call my Countryman; a gentleman who was a Foreign Ambassador as soon as he was a man, and a Leader of Armies as soon as he was a soldier, and that with an *éclat* unknown to the usual minions of a Court—men who, with all the adventitious advantages of Princely connexions and Princely Fortune, must yet, like the caterpillar, labor a whole lifetime before they reach the wished-for height, there to roost a stupid chrysalis, and doze out the remaining glimmering existence of old age.

If the gentleman who accompanied you when you did me the honor of calling on me, is with you, I beg to be respectfully remembered to him.—I have the honor to be, Sir, your highly obliged, and most devoted humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

ELLISLAND, *Oct.* 3, 1791.

The original MS. of the foregoing beautiful letter is now in the possession of John Adam, Esq., Greenock. Colonel Fullarton is referred to in "The Vision," as "Brydone's brave Ward." In 1793, he published a "View of Agriculture in Ayrshire," in which he thus compliments Burns, not as a poet, but as a farmer or cattle-owner:—"In order to prevent the danger arising from horned cattle in studs and straw-yards, the best mode is to cut out the budding knob, or root of the horn, while the calf is very young. This was suggested to me by Mr. Robert Burns, whose general talents are no less conspicuous than the poetic powers which have done so much honor to the county in which he was born."

About this period, when our bard had determined on abandoning for ever a farmer's life, his attention was mainly directed to attain some increase in his Excise emoluments by changing his present district for one at a sea-port. A year before this he had, through the favor of Collector Mitchell, been appointed to "a vacant foot-walk in Dumfries;" but still he had not atttained the position of a "port-officer." The letter addressed to Mr. Corbet, above given, explains his views on this matter, and his never-failing patron Mr. Graham is again addressed both in verse and prose, to remind him of "Nature's poor, fenceless, naked child, the Bard."

(8) TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY.

ENCLOSING THE SECOND POETICAL EPISTLE.*

(CHAMBERS, 1856.)

ELLISLAND, *Oct.* 5, 1791.

I OUGHT to have written you long ago; but a mere letter of thanks must to you be an insipid business. I

* Commencing "Late crippled of an arm," &c., page 79, *supra*.

wish to send you something that will give you at least as much amusement as "The Aberdeen New Prognosticator," or "Six Excellent New Songs." Along with two other pieces, I enclose you a sheetful of groans, wrung from me in my elbow-chair, with one unlucky leg on a stool before me. I will make no apology for addressing it to you; I have no longer a choice of patrons; the truly noble Glencairn is no more! I intend soon to do myself the honor of writing Mrs. Graham, and sending her some other lesser pieces of late date. My muse will sooner be in mischief than be idle; so I keep her at work.

I thought to have mentioned some Excise ideas that your late goodness has put in my head; but it is so like the sorning impudence of a sturdy beggar, that I cannot do it. It was something in the way of an officiating job. With the most ardent wish that you may be rewarded by *Him* who can do it, for your generous patronage to a man who, though feelingly sensible of it, is quite unable to repay it.—I have the honor to be, &c. ROBT. BURNS.

(11) TO MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

ELLISLAND, *Oct.* 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was never more unfit for writing. A poor devil, nailed to an elbow-chair, writing in anguish with a bruised leg laid on a stool before him, is in a fine situation truly for saying bright things.

I may perhaps see you about Martinmas. I have sold to my landlord the lease of my farm, and as I roup off everything then, I have a mind to take a week's excursion to see old acquaintance. At all

events, you may reckon on [payment of] your account about that time. So much for business. I do not know if I ever informed you that I am now ranked on the list as a supervisor, and I have pretty good reason to believe that I shall soon be called out to employment. The appointment is worth from one to two hundred a year, according to the place of the country in which one is settled. I have not been so lucky in my farming. Mr. Miller's kindness has been just such another as Creech's was—but this for your private ear:

> "His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
> Still making work his selfish craft must mend."

By the way I have taken a damned vengeance of Creech. He wrote me a fine, fair letter, telling me that he was going to print a third edition; and as he had a brother's care of my fame, he wished to add every new thing I have written since, and I should be amply rewarded with—a copy or two to present to my friends! He has sent me a copy of the last edition to correct, &c., but I have as yet taken no notice of it; and I hear he has published without me.* You know, and all my friends know, that I do not value money; but I owed the gentleman a debt, which I am happy to have it in my power to repay.

Farewell, and prosperity attend all your undertakings! I shall try, if my unlucky limb would give me a little ease, to write you a letter a little better worth reading. Put the enclosed to post. R. B.

---

* Creech issued a reprint of the one volume Edinburgh edition in July 1790. In September 1791 Messrs. Cadell and Davies of London, recommended Mr. Creech to print an edition of 1000 copies in 2 vols. crown 8vo. We shall hereafter see that not till April 1792 did Burns agree to co-operate with Creech in that matter, and undertake to supply him with additional poems to the extent of 50 pages or so.

FROM MARTINMAS 1791 TO 21ST JULY 1796.

MRS. Burns, in her memoranda noted down by Mr. M'Diarmid, says—"We did not come empty-handed to Dumfries. The Ellisland sale was a very good one, and was well attended. A cow in her first calf brought eighteen guineas, and the purchaser never rued his bargain. Two other cows brought good prices. They had been presented by Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop. Burns neither failed as a farmer, nor in any other capacity. At Martinmas 1791, he repaired to Dumfries, and took up his abode in Bank Street. His salary as an Exciseman never exceeded £70, and that he only got as Port-officer."

The house which Burns occupied comprised three small apartments of a second floor on the north side of Bank Street, then called "the Wee Vennel," and is thus described by Chambers:—"The small central room, about the size of a bed-closet, is the only place in which he may seclude himself for study. On the ground floor immediately underneath, his friend John Syme has his office for the distribution of stamps. Overhead (in the third floor) is an honest blacksmith, called John Haugh, whom Burns treats on a familiar footing as a neighbor. On the opposite side of the street is the poet's landlord, Captain Hamilton, a gentleman of fortune and worth, who admires Burns, and often asks him to a family Sunday dinner."

It is a curious circumstance—perhaps an ominous one, that the earliest letter of Burns we have to record after his removal to Dumfries is a most melancholy one. Dr. Currie printed it without date, placing it among the Ellisland letters in the autumn of 1791; but the postscript decidedly indicates a change of locality in the writer's address—"I have one or two good fellows *here*, whom you would be glad to know." Ainslie had been a guest at Ellisland, and introduced to all the "good fellows" there.

(14) TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, *Nov.* 1791.

MY DEAR AINSLIE,—Can you minister to a mind diseased? Can you, amid the horrors of penitence, regret, remorse, headache, nausea, and all the rest of

the hounds of hell that beset a poor wretch who has been guilty of the sin of drunkenness—can you speak peace to a troubled soul?

Miserable perdu that I am! I have tried everything that used to amuse me, but in vain: here must I sit, a monument of the vengeance laid up in store for the wicked, slowly counting every click of the clock as it slowly—slowly, numbers over these lazy scoundrels of hours who (d—n them!) are ranked up before me, every one at his neighbor's backside, and every one with a burden of anguish on his back, to pour on my devoted head—and there is none to pity me. My wife scolds me! my business torments me, and my sins come staring me in the face, every one telling a more bitter tale than his fellow. When I tell you, even * * * * has lost its power to please, you will guess something of my hell within, and all around me. I began "Elibanks and Elibraes," but the stanzas fell unenjoyed and unfinished from my listless tongue; at last I luckily thought of reading over an old letter of yours that lay by me in my bookcase, and I felt something, for the first time since I opened my eyes, of pleasurable existence.——Well—I begin to breathe a little since I began to write you. How are you, and what are you doing? How goes law? Apropos, for connection's sake do not address me as "Supervisor," for that is an honor I canot pretend to—I am on the list, as we call it, for a Supervisorship, and will be called out by and by to act as one; but at present, I am a simple Gauger, tho' t'other day I got an appointment to an excise division of £25 *per ann.* better than the rest. My present income, down money, is £70 *per ann.*

* * * * * * *

I have one or two good fellows here whom you would be glad to know.

* * * * * * *

R. B.

(32) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[DUMFRIES, *17th December* 1791.*]

MANY thanks to you, Madam, for your good news respecting the little floweret and the mother-plant. I hope my poetic prayers have been heard, and will be answered up to the warmest sincerity of their fullest extent; and then Mrs. Henri will find her little darling the representative of his late parent, in everything but his abridged existence.

I have just finished the following song which, to a lady the descendant of Wallace, and many heroes of his truly illustrious line—and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology.

Scene—A field of battle—time of the day, evening; the wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following

SONG OF DEATH.

Farewell thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with the bright setting sun;
Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear, tender ties—
Our race of existence is run! &c.—See page 82, *supra*.

The circumstance that gave rise to the foregoing verses was—looking over with a musical friend M'Donald's collection of Highland airs, I was struck with one, an Isle of Sky tune, entitled *Oran an Aoig*, or "The Song of Death," to the measure of which I have adapted my stanzas. I have of late composed two or three other little pieces, which, ere yon full-

* Dr. Currie dated this letter from "Ellisland," which must be a mistake if his date be correct. The immediately preceding letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated 11th April 1791, speaks of young Henri having the small-pox, and the "good news" here spoken of probably refer to the mother and child's safe arrival in France, at the invitation of the deceased Mr. Henri's relatives.

orbed moon, whose broad impudent face now stares at Mother Earth all night, shall have shrunk into a modest crescent, just peeping forth at dewy dawn, I shall find an hour to transcribe for you. *A Dieu je vous commende.* ROBT. BURNS.

A.D. 1792.

(1) TO MR. JAMES CLARKE, SCHOOLMASTER, MOFFAT.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

DUMFRIES, 10*th January* 1792.

I RECEIVED yours this moment, my dear Sir. I sup with Captain Riddell in town to-night, else I had gone to Carse directly. *Courage, mon ami!* The day may, after all, be yours: but at any rate, there is other air to breathe than that of Moffat, pestiferously tainted as it is with the breath of that arch-rascal J———. There are two quotations from two poets which, in situations such as yours, were congenial to my soul. Thomson says:—

> "What proves the hero truly great
> Is never, never to despair."

And Dr. Young:—

> "On Reason build Resolve,
> That column of true Majesty in man."

To-morrow you shall know the result of my consultation with Captain Riddell. Yours, R. B.

Captain Riddell, of Carse and Glenriddell, had a younger brother, Mr. Walter Riddell, who possessed an estate in the Island of Antigua, and had recently returned to his native country to enjoy, in a more temperate climate and in more agreeable society, the proceeds of his possessions. His wife, a

gay young Creole, under twenty, although already a mother, was blessed with personal beauty, agreeable manners and many accomplishments, to which were superadded a taste for natural history and polite literature. It appears that Burns was introduced to her on taking up his residence in Dumfries, and as she delighted in the society of men of talent and spirit he soon became a frequent visitor at Woodley Park, the residence of her husband, situated about four miles south from the town. The name thus given to their newly acquired residence, formerly called "Goldielea," was bestowed in honor of the lady's family name, her father being Mr. Woodley, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of St. Kitts, and the Leeward Islands.

In course of her voyage to this country, Mrs. Riddell had passed some time at the Leeward Isles, and at Madeira, where she made scientific observations and notes of their natural history; these notes were now arranged in form of a volume which she resolved on publishing.* Having learned that Mr. William Smellie, of Edinburgh, author of a work on natural history, was the printer of Burns's Edinburgh edition, she applied to the poet to give her a letter of introduction to the scientific printer, which was promptly acceded to, in the following amusing fashion.

(1) TO MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE, PRINTER, EDINBURGH.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, *22d January* 1792.

I SIT down, my dear Sir, to introduce a young lady to you, and a lady in the first ranks of fashion too. What a task! to you—who care no more for the herd of animals called young ladies, than you do for the herd of animals called young gentlemen. To you—who despise and detest the groupings and combinations of fashion, as an idiot painter that seems indus-

* Mrs. Riddell's work is thus announced in the *Scots Magazine* of November, 1792, as just published:—"Voyages to Madeira and Leeward Caribee Islands; with Sketches of the Natural History of these Islands. By MARIA R——, Cadell, London; Hill, Edinburgh."

trious to place staring fools and unprincipled knaves in the foreground of his picture, while men of sense and honesty are too often thrown in the dimmest shades. Mrs. Riddell, who will take this letter to town with her and send it to you, is a character that, even in your own way, as a naturalist and a philosopher, would be an acquisition to your acquaintance. The lady too is a votary of the muses; and as I think myself somewhat of a judge of my own trade, I assure you that her verses, always correct, and often elegant, are much beyond the common run of the *lady poetesses* of the day. She is a great admirer of your book, and hearing me say that I was acquainted with you, she begged to be known to you, as she is just going to pay her first visit to our Caledonian capital. I told her that her best way was, to desire her near relation, and your intimate friend, Craigdarroch, to have you at his house while she was there; and lest you might think of a lively West Indian girl of eighteen, as girls of eighteen too often deserve to be thought of, I should take care to remove that prejudice. To be impartial, however, in appreciating the lady's merits, she has one unlucky failing! a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it; and a failing that you will as easily pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself—where she dislikes or despises, she is apt to make no more a secret of it, than where she esteems and respects.

I will not present you with the unmeaning "compliments of the season," but I will send you my warmest wishes and most ardent prayers that *Fortune* may never throw your *subsistence* to the mercy of a *Knave*, or set your *character* on the judgment of a *Fool;* but that, upright and erect, you may walk to an honest grave, where men of letters shall say:—"Here lies a man who did honor to science," and

men of worth shall say :—"Here lies a man who did honor to human nature." ROBT. BURNS.

(12) TO MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

DUMFRIES, *5th Feb.*, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I send you by the bearer, Mr. Clarke, a particular friend of mine, six pounds and a shilling, which you will dispose of as follows :—£5, 10s. per acct., I owe to Mr. Robt. Burn, architect, for erecting the stone over poor Ferguson. He was two years in erecting it after I commissioned him for it, and I have been two years in paying him after he sent his account, so he and I are quits. He had the hardness to ask me interest on the sum ; but, considering that the money was due by one Poet for putting a tombstone over another, he may, with grateful surprise, thank Heaven that ever he saw a farthing of it.

With the remainder of the money, pay yourself for the "Office of a Messenger" that I bought of you ; and send me by Mr. Clarke a note of its price. Send me, likewise, the fifth volume of the "Observer," by Mr. Clarke ; and if any money remain, let it stand to account.

My best compliments to Mrs. Hill. I sent you a *Maukin* by last week's Fly which I hope you received. Yours most sincerely, ROBT. BURNS.

The original MS. of the above letter is now in possession of Thomas Arnott, Esq., Laurel Bank, Partick, Glasgow, and the architect's account referred to is preserved in the poet's monument at Edinburgh. The following is a literal transcript :—

Mr. Robert Burns,

To J. & R. Burn.

June 23, 1789.

54 Feet polished Craigleith Stone for a Headstone for Robert Ferguson, at 1s.,	£2	14	0
10 Feet 8 inches dble. Base Moulding, at 1s. 6d.,	0	16	0
4 Large Iron Cramps,	0	2	10
2 Stones to set the base on, at 1s.,	0	2	0
320 Letters on do., at 8s.,	1	5	8
Head, and setting up ditto,	0	5	0
Gravedigger's dues,	0	5	0

In the letter which enclosed the account to the poet in 1789, Mr. Robert Burn,* apologises for the delay that had taken place in erecting the stone, and facetiously adds:—"I shall be happy to receive orders of a like nature for as many more of your friends that have gone hence as you please."

(9) TO ALEX. CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., WRITER, EDINBURGH.

(Douglas, 1877.)†

My dear Cunningham:—To-morrow, or some day soon, I will write you as entertaining a letter as I can; in the meantime take a scrawl of very serious business. You remember Mr. Clarke, Master of the Grammar School at Moffat, whom I formerly recommended to your good offices: the crisis of his fate is just at hand.‡ Mr. M'Murdo of Drumlanrig, Ferguson of Craigdarroch, and Riddell of Glenriddell, gentlemen who know Clarke personally and intimately, have strained and are straining every nerve to serve him, but alas! poor Clarke's foes are mighty! Lord Hopetoun, spurred on by those infernal creatures that always go between a great Man and his inferiors, has sworn his destruction; irritated as he justly is that any Plebeian, and the son of a Plebeian, should dare to oppose *existence*—a trifling affair, against his Lordship's high

*"Died at Edinburgh, June 5, 1815, Mr. Robert Burn, architect."—*Scots Magazine.*

†From the poet's holograph in the possession of James T. Gibson Craig, Esq., Edinburgh.

‡See the poet's letters to Clarke at pp. 288 and 293 of present volume.

and mighty will. What I know, and *you* know that I would do for a friend of yours, I ask of you for a friend—a much esteemed friend of mine. Get the Principal's interest in his favor.* Be not denied! To interpose between lordly cruelty and helpless merit is a task worthy of you to ask, and him to execute. In the meantime, if you meet with Craigdarroch, or chance to wait on him (by the bye, I wish you would mention this very business), he will inform you of the great merits of one party, and the demerits of the other.

You shall hear from me soon. God bless you!

ROBT. BURNS.

DUMFRIES, *5th Feb.* 1792.

(2) TO MR. JAMES CLARKE, SCHOOLMASTER, MOFFAT.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

DUMFRIES, *17th Feb.*, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,—If this finds you at Moffat, or as soon as it finds you at Moffat, you must without delay wait on Mr. Riddell, as he has been very kindly thinking of you in an affair that has occurred of a clerk's place in Manchester, which, if your hopes are desperate in your present business, he proposes procuring for you. I know your gratitude for past, as well as hopes of future, favors will induce you to pay every attention to Glenriddell's wishes; as he is almost the only, and undoubtedly the best friend that your unlucky fate has left you.

Apropos, I just now hear that you have beat your foes, *every tail hollow.* Huzza! *Io triumphe!* † Mr.

* Principal Robertson, the historian, was Cunningham's uncle.

† Notwithstanding the "triumph," it is certain that Clarke still continued to require, and did obtain, assistance from our poet, and he soon relinquished his situation at Moffat for a similar one in Forfar. The reader will hear of him again in 1796.

Riddell, who is at my elbow, says that if it is so, he begs that you will wait on him directly, and I know you are too good a man not to pay your respects to your saviour. Yours, R. B.

Down to the present date, the reader has seen little or nothing of any interest which Burns took in the progress of the French Revolution. Just about the time when he was corresponding with Helen Maria Williams of London, and criticising her poem on Slavery, in July 1789, the Bastile was destroyed and the Princes of the Blood and chief Noblesse were fain to escape from France. In October following, poor Louis XVI. was brought to Paris, and forced to accept the "Declaration of the Rights of Man." This was immediately followed by a Decree of the National Assembly re-constructing France into Departments; and Monastic Institutions and Titles of Nobility were suppressed. The King, who was kept a close prisoner, failed in an attempt to escape, in June 1791, and was forced formally to accept the new Constitution. Such was the position of matters at the date we have now reached. A minute examination of the daily chronicles of that period indicates little or no apprehension in Britain, that as a nation it was soon to become the enemy of the French. Certainly, from the first outbreak, Edmund Burke threw out what he deemed patriotic warnings of a bloody future; but, as yet, little suspicion of evil consequences was exhibited by the British public.* In January 1792, George III. opened parliament with congratulations on the peace and internal prosperity of the country; and Burns was only one of the many thousands at home who felt and expressed sympathy with the "French reformers."

At page 113, *supra*, we have, in connexion with the song, "The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman," introduced Lockhart's account of the capture of a smuggling craft in February 1792 by Burns and his party, of the sale of the stores and arms of the captured vessel, and of the purchase by the poet of four carronades, said to have been afterwards forwarded by him as a present to the French National Assembly. That story may be either a fact or an invention; but it does not justify Mr. Lockhart's condemnation of the poet's act of sympathy with

* "The Revolution in France, which patriots behold with admiration, and angels with applause, is vilified and traduced by Burke."—Letter of "Philo-Theodosius" in the *Scots Magazine*, June 1790.

what he reckoned the cause of human freedom. He was doing no more than was being done around him on every side. In the latter part of January 1792, a subscription was opened in Glasgow "to aid the French in carrying on the war against the emigrant princes, or any foreign power by whom they may be attacked." The newspaper paragraph in which the announcement appeared, adds that "a sum of £1200 has already been subscribed." Burns, it is true, was a servant of the government at the time he is alleged to have been guilty of "an absurd and presumptuous breach of decorum" in sending the four pieces of small ordnance to France; but he did the act *openly*, if it was done at all, and nowhere does it appear that any person entitled to take notice of and challenge his conduct, was of opinion that he committed a fault.

TO J. LEVEN, ESQ.,

GEN. SUPERVISOR, EXCISE OFFICE, EDINBURGH.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

[MARCH, 1792.]

SIR,—I have sealed and secured Lawson's Tea, but no permit has yet appeared, nor can it appear before Tuesday at the nearest; so there is the greater chance of the condemnation. I shrewdly suspect the Newcastle House, Rankine and Sons, is the firm; they will think that the goods being regularly delivered to a Carrier, with proper permit, will exonerate them as to farther responsibility; and Lawson, on his part, is determined not to have anything to do with it; so our process may be the easier managed.

The moment that the permits arrive, as I am pretty certain they will, I shall inform you; but, in the meantime, when the three remaining boxes arrive, as they cannot, *in quality*, correspond with the permit,

* From Alexander Laing, Esq., Newburgh on Tay, Mr. Douglas obtained a copy of this letter from the poet's holograph, now in possession of the widow of James Painter, Esq., St. John's Wood, London, who was a nephew of the gentleman addressed.

and besides, will be at least beyond the limited time a full week—are not they seizable?

Mr. Mitchell mentioned to you a ballad, which I composed, and sung at one of his Excise Court dinners: here it is:—

THE DEIL'S AWA WI' TH' EXCISEMAN.

Tune—"Madam Cossy."

Chorus.—The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman,
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman,
&c., &c.

If you honor my ballad by making it one of your charming *bon vivant* effusions, it will secure it undoubted celebrity.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obliged and devoted humble serv^{t}., ROB^{T}. BURNS.*

On 10th April 1792. The Royal Archers of Scotland complimented Burns by granting him a Diploma as a member of their corporation, which was duly forwarded to him at Dumfries. The Poet refers to that honor conferred on him in his letter to Cunningham of 10th September following.

The Diploma is now preserved in the bard's Monument at Edinburgh.

(^{2}) TO WILLIAM CREECH, ESQ., BOOKSELLER.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

DUMFRIES, 16*th April* 1792.

SIR,—I this moment have yours, and were it not that habit, as usual, has deadened conscience, my

* In our note at page 283, *supra*, attached to the popular song referred to, we found on this letter, as helping to overturn the romantic story communicated by Mr. Joseph Train to Sir Walter Scott in 1827, concerning the occasion which prompted the song.

criminal indolence should lead me an uneasy life of reproach. I ought long ago to have written you on this very business.*

Now, to try a language of which I am not half master, I shall assume as well as I can, the man of business. I suppose, at a gross guess, that I could add of new materials to your two volumes, about fifty pages. I would also correct and retrench a good deal. These said fifty pages you know are as much mine as the thumb-stall I have just now drawn on my finger which I unfortunately gashed in mending my pen. A few books which I very much want are all the recompence I crave, together with as many copies of this new edition of my own works as Friendship or Gratitude shall prompt me to present. There are three men whom you know, and whose friendly patronage I think I can trouble so far—Messrs. M'Kenzie, D. Stewart, and F. Tytler; to any of these I shall submit my MSS. for their strictures; and also let *them* say on my informing them—I mean any of them—what *Authors* I want, to what value of them I am entitled. If he adjudge me a "Tom Thumb" I am content. The "Man of Feeling," and Professor Stewart are, I hear, busy with works of their own, for which reason I shall prefer Tytler. So soon as I hear from you, I shall write Mr. Tytler, and in a fortnight more I shall put my MSS. in his hands.

If the thing were possible that I could receive the proof-sheets by our Dumfries Fly, which runs three times a week, I would earnestly wish to correct them myself.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your very humble servt.,

ROBT. BURNS.†

---

* See page 284, *supra*.

† For access to the original MS. of this important letter, we are indebted to the representatives of Mr. Creech.

(6) TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON, ENGRAVER, LAWNMARKET, EDINBURGH.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

DUMFRIES, *May* 1792.

DR. SIR,—This will be presented to you by one of your subscribers, and a gentleman to whose musical talents you are much indebted for getting your Scotch tunes. Let him know your progress, and how you come on with the work. Inclosed is one song out of many I have yet to send you; and likewise I inclose you another, and I think, a better set of Craigieburn-wood, which you will give to Mr. Clarke to compare with the former set, as I am extremely anxious to have that song right,—I am, dr. Sir, yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

(7) TO MR. STEPHEN CLARKE, ORGANIST, EDINBURGH.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

DUMFRIES, 16*th July* 1792.

MR. BURNS begs leave to present his most respectful compliments to Mr. Clarke. Mr. B. some time ago did himself the honor of writing Mr. C. respecting coming out to the country, to give a little musical instruction in a highly respectable family, where Mr. C. may have his own terms, and may be as happy as indolence, the Devil, and the gout will permit him. Mr. B. knows well how Mr. C. is engaged with another family; but cannot Mr. C. find two or three weeks to spare to each of them? Mr. B. is deeply impressed

* From the original MS. in the British Museum, London.

with, and awfully conscious of, the high importance of Mr. C.'s time, whether in the winged moments of symphonious exhibition at the keys of harmony, while listening Seraphs cease from their own less delightful strains; or in the drowsy hours of slumb'rous repose, in the arms of his dearly beloved elbow-chair, where the frowsy, but potent Power of indolence, circumfuses her vapors round, and sheds her dews on, the head of her darling Son.

But half a line conveying half a meaning from Mr. C. would make Mr. B. the very happiest of mortals.

PREFACE TO VOL. IV. OF JOHNSON'S MUSEUM.

When the Editor published the third volume of this work, he had reason to conclude that one volume more would finish the Publication. Still, however, he has a considerable number of Scots airs and Songs more than his plan allowed him to include in this fourth volume. These, though in all probability they will not amount to what he has hitherto published as one volume, he shall yet give to the world; that the Scots Musical Museum may be a Collection of every Scots song extant.

To those who object that this Publication contains pieces of inferior, or little, value, the Editor answers by referring to his plan. All our songs cannot have equal merit. Besides, as the world has not agreed on any unerring balance, any undisputed standard, in matters of taste, what to one person yields no manner of pleasure, may to another be a high enjoyment.

Edin., *August* 13, 1792.*

* It may be of some interest here to enumerate a few of the more popular

(3) TO ROBERT RIDDELL, ESQ., OF GLENRIDDELL.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

[*Dumfries*, 1792.]

MY DEAR SIR,—On rummaging over some old papers I lighted on a manuscript of my early years, in which I had determined to write myself out; as I was placed by fortune among a class of men to whom my ideas would have been nonsense. I had meant that the book should have lain by me, in the fond hope that, some time or other, even after I was no more, my thoughts would fall into the hands of somebody capable of appreciating their value. It sets off thus:—

"OBSERVATIONS, HINTS, SONGS, SCRAPS OF POETRY, &C., BY R. B.

(See Common-place Book, Vol. V.)

The foregoing is extracted from the MS. book of Letters collected by the author for his friend, Captain Riddell, and forms the Introduction to an Abridgement of his first Common-place Book. In that abridged copy, the poet made a few verbal alterations in course of transcribing, but these are unimportant; for instance, the substitution of the expression "courted," for *coveted*, and "language of the Hebrew bard," for *language of Scripture*. He closes the selections in these

---

songs of Burns that made their first appearance in the volume above referred to:—

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever.
An' O for ane and twenty Tam.
Bonie wee thing, cannie wee thing.
The Song of Death.
Flow gently sweet Afton.
The Whistle of worth.
The Posie.
The gallant Weaver.
O meikle thinks my love o' my beauty.
Craigieburn Wood.
She's fair and fause.
Turn again, thou fair Eliza.
My bonie Bell.
The deil's awa wi' the Exciseman.
Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon.
Willie Wastle dwelt on Tweed.
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?

words :—"This is all that, and perhaps more than, is worth quoting in my MSS."

We come now to a letter which is very difficult to place in its proper chronological order. It is impossible to say at what date our author was prevailed on by his kind friend Mr. M'Murdo to undergo an introduction to, and personal interview with, the Duke of Queensberry, the bare mention of whose name had, for a series of years, been sufficient to rouse him into indignation. Certain it is, however, that such a personal meeting between the poet and the Whig Peer did take place, as the following letter addressed to the Duke shortly thereafter, informs us. It is copied into the Glenriddell collection of the poet's letters, without any date attached or suggested; and we present it under the latest probable date, as the bard was not likely to send, in manuscript, his poem of the Whistle to any one after it was published to the world. This Peer would be about 66 years old in 1792. He survived till 23rd December 1810.

(1) TO THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY,

ENCLOSING THE BALLAD OF "THE WHISTLE."

(Douglas, 1877.)

My Lord Duke,—Will your Grace pardon this approach in a poor Poet, who perhaps intrudes on your converse with Princes, to present you—all he has to offer—his best ballad, and to beg of you—all he has to ask—your gracious acceptance of it? Whatever might be my opinion of the merits of the poem, I would not have dared to take the liberty of presenting it thus, but for your Grace's acquaintance with the *Dramatis Personæ* of the piece.*

---

* The identical Whistle won by Craigdarroch at the celebrated bacchanalian contest on 16th October 1789, was produced at the anniversary dinner of the Edinburgh Burns Club, 1867, by its vice-president, Mr. Maitland of Eccles, the

When I first thought of sending my poem to your Grace, I had some misgivings of heart about it—something within me seemed to say:—"A nobleman of the first rank and the first taste, and who has lived in the first Court of Europe, what will he care for either you or your ballad? Depend upon it that he will look on this business as some one or other of the many modifications of that servility of soul with which authors, and particularly you poets, have ever approached the Great."

No! said I to myself, I am conscious of the purity of my motives; and as I never crouch to any man but the man I have wronged, nor even him unless he forgives me, I will approach his Grace with tolerable upright confidence, that were I and my ballad poorer stuff than we are, the Duke of Queensberry's polite affability would make me welcome, as my sole motive is to show how sincerely I have the honor to be,

My Lord Duke,

Your Grace's most obedient, humble servant,

Robt. Burns.

This was written shortly after I had the honor of being introduced to the Duke, at which introduction I spent the evening with him, when he treated me with the most distinguished politeness and marked attention. Though I am afraid his Grace's character as a Man of Worth is very equivocal, yet he certainly is a Nobleman of the first taste, and a Gentleman of the first manners. R. B.

---

legal guardian of young Mr. Fergusson of Craigdarroch, custodier of that interesting heir-loom. Mr. Maitland was then, and for several years thereafter, an office-bearer in the Club.

(35) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

Annan Water Foot, 22nd August 1792.

Do not blame me for it, Madam;—my own conscience, hackneyed and weatherbeaten as it is, in watching and reproving my vagaries, follies, indolence, &c., has continued to blame and punish me sufficiently.

* * * * * *

Do you think it possible, my dear and honored Friend, that I could be so lost to gratitude for many favors, to esteem for much worth, and to the honest, kind, pleasurable tie of, now, old acquaintance, and I hope and am sure, of progressive, increasing friendship—as, for a single day, not to think of you—to ask the Fates what they are doing and about to do with my much-beloved Friend and her wide-scattered connexions, and to beg of them to be as kind to you and yours as they possibly can?

Apropos (though how it is apropos, I have not leisure to explain), do you not know that I am almost in love with an acquaintance of yours?—Almost! said I—I am in love, souse! over head and ears, deep as the most unfathomable abyss of the boundless ocean; but the word Love, owing to the *intermingledoms* of the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, in this world, being rather an equivocal term for expressing one's sentiments and sensations, I must do justice to the sacred purity of my attachment. Know, then, that the heart-struck awe; the distant humble approach; the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a Messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to

them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting, and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Bailie, your neighbor, at Mayfield. Mr. B. with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr. H. of G., passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honor of calling on me; on which I took my horse* (though God knows I could ill spare the time), and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them; and, riding home, I composed the following ballad, of which you will probably think you have a dear bargain, as it will cost you another groat of postage. You must know that there is an old ballad beginning with—

"My bonie Lizie Baillie,
I'll rowe thee in my plaidie," &c.

so I parodied it as follows, which is literally the first copy, "unanointed, unanneal'd," as Hamlet says:—

O saw ye bonie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther, &c.

See page 120, *supra*.

So much for ballads. I regret that you are gone to the east country, as I am to be in Ayrshire in about a fortnight. This world of ours, notwithstanding it has many good things in it, yet it has ever had this curse, that two or three people who would be the happier the oftener they met together, are, almost without exception, always so placed as never to meet

* We are not to conclude from this expression, "my horse," that Burns, with his slender income, was able to purchase and maintain a riding horse. In special journeys to distant places, on excise business, he was permitted to hire a horse and charge it as an item of expenditure.

but once or twice a-year; which, considering the few years of a man's life, is a very great "evil under the sun," which I do not recollect that Solomon has mentioned in his catalogue of the miseries of man. I hope and believe that there is a state of existence beyond the grave, where the worthy of this life will renew their former intimacies, with this endearing addition, that, "we meet to part no more."

* * * * * * *

"Tell us, ye dead,
Will none of you in pity disclose the secret,
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?"

A thousand times have I made this apostrophe to the departed sons of men, but not one of them has ever thought fit to answer the question. "O that some courteous ghost would blab it out?" but it cannot be: you and I, my friend, must make the experiment by ourselves and for ourselves. However, I am so convinced that an unshaken faith in the doctrines of religion is not only necessary by making us better men, but also by making us happier men, that I shall take every care that your little godson, and every little creature that shall call me father, shall be taught them.

So ends this heterogeneous letter, written at this wild place of the world, in the intervals of my labor of discharging a vessel of rum from Antigua.

R. B.

(10) TO MR. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM, WRITER,

46 South Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

Some little time after his marriage, and after, through his recommendation, I had been presented with a Diploma from the Edinburgh Company of Royal Archers.

(Currie, 1800.)*

Dumfries, 10*th September* 1792.

No! I will not attempt an apology. Amid all my hurry of business, grinding the faces of the publican and sinner on the merciless wheels of the Excise; making ballads, and then drinking and singing them to my drink; and, over and above all, the correcting the press-work of two different publications:† still, still I might have stolen five minutes to dedicate to one of the first of my friends and fellow-creatures. I might have done, as I do at present, when I am snatching an hour near "witching time of night," and scrawling a page or two—I might have congratulated my friend on his marriage; or I might have thanked the Caledonian Archers for the honor they have done me, (though to do myself justice, I intended to have done both in rhyme, else I had done both before now). Well then, here is your good health! for I have set a nipperkin of toddy by me by way of spell to keep away the meikle horned Deil, or any of his subaltern imps who may be on their nightly rounds.

---

* Currie's version is not so complete as the one in our text, which is taken from the poet's own transcript.

† There can be little doubt that the poet refers here to (1) the forthcoming edition, in two volumes, of his own poems; and (2) to the preparing and correcting of the sheets of Volume V. of Johnson's Museum, which however remained unpublished till after his own death.

But what shall I write to you?—"The voice said cry," and I said, "What shall I cry?" O thou Spirit! whatever thou art, or wherever thou makest thyself visible! be thou a Bogle by the eerie side of an auld thorn, in the dreary glen through which the herd-callan maun bicker in his gloamin route frae the fauld! Be thou a Brownie, set, at dead of night, to thy task by the blazing ingle, or in the solitary barn, where the repercussions of thy iron flail half affright thyself, as thou performest the work of twenty of the sons of men, ere the cock-crowing summon thee to thy ample cog of substantial brose. Be thou a Kelpie, haunting the ford or ferry in the starless night, mixing thy laughing yell with the howling of the storm and the roaring of the flood, as thou viewest the perils and miseries of man on the foundering horse, or in the tumbling boat! Or, lastly, be thou a Ghost, paying thy nocturnal visits to the hoary ruins of decayed grandeur; or performing thy mystic rites in the shadow of the time-worn church, while the moon looks, without a cloud, on the silent ghastly dwellings of the dead beside thee; or, taking thy stand by the bedside of the villain, or the murderer, portraying on their dreaming fancy, pictures, dreadful as the horrors of unveiled hell, and terrible as the wrath of incensed Deity!—Come, thou Spirit, but not in these horrid forms: come with the milder, gentle, easy inspirations, which thou breathest round the wig of a prating advocate, or the *tête-à-tête* of a tea-bibbing gossip, while their tongues run at the light-horse gallop of clashmaclaver for ever and ever—come and assist a poor devil who is quite jaded in the attempt to share half an idea among half a hundred words; to fill up four quarto pages, while he has not got one single sentence of recollection, information, or remark worth recording!

I feel, I feel the presence of supernatural assistance!

Circled in the embrace of my elbow-chair, my breast labors like the bloated Sybil on her three-footed stool, and like her, too, labors with Nonsense.—Nonsense, auspicious name! Tutor, friend, and finger-post in the mystic mazes of law; the cadaverous paths of physic; and particularly in the sightless soarings of SCHOOL DIVINITY, who, leaving Common Sense confounded at his strength of pinion; Reason delirious with eyeing his giddy flight; and Truth—creeping back into the bottom of her well, cursing the hour that ever she offered her scorned alliance to the wizard power of Theologic Vision—raves abroad on all the winds:—"On earth Discord! a gloomy Heaven above, opening her jealous gates to the nineteen-thousandth part of the tithe of mankind! and below, an inescapable and inexorable hell, expanding its leviathan jaws for the vast residue of mortals!!!" —O doctrine! comfortable and healing to the weary, wounded soul of man! Ye sons and daughters of affliction, ye *pauvres miserables*, to whom day brings no pleasure and night yields no rest, be comforted! 'Tis but *one* to nineteen hundred thousand that your situation will mend in this world; and 'tis nineteen hundred thousand to one, by the dogmas of Theology, that you will be damned eternally in the world to come! So, alas! the experience of the poor and the needy too truly affirms.

But of all Nonsense, Religious Nonsense is the most nonsensical; so enough, and more than enough of it. Only, by the by, will you, or can you tell me, my dear Cunningham, why a religious turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalize the heart? They are orderly; they may be just; nay, I have known them merciful; but still your children of super-sanctity move among their fellow-creatures with a nostril-snuffing putrescence, and a foot—spurning filth; in short, with that conceited dignity that

your titled Douglasses, Hamiltons, Gordons, or any other of your Scottish lordlings, of seven centuries standing, display, when they accidentally mix among the many apron'd sons of mechanical life. I remember, in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or that a godly man could be a knave. How ignorant are plough-boys!—Nay, I have since discovered that a *godly woman* may be a ———. But hold (Here's t'ye again!) this rum is damn'd generous Antigua, so a very unfit menstruum for scandal.

Apropos, how do you like—I mean *really* like—the married life? Ah, my friend! matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths and sighing girls take it to be! But marriage, we are told, is appointed by God, and I shall never quarrel with any of His institutions. I am a husband of older standing than you, and shall give you *my* ideas of the happiness of the conjugal state (*en passant*—you know I am no Latinist—is not *conjugal* derived from *jugum*, a yoke?). Well then, the scale of good wifeship I divide into ten parts:—Good-nature, *four;* Good Sense, *two;* Wit, *one;* Personal Charms, viz.—a sweet face, eloquent eyes, fine limbs, graceful carriage (I would add a fine waist too, but that is so soon spoilt you know), all these, *One;* as for the other qualities belonging to, or attending on a wife, such as fortune, connections, education (I mean more than the ordinary run), family blood, &c., divide the *Two* remaining degrees among them as you please; only, remember that all these minor properties must be expressed by *fractions*, for there is not any one of them, in my aforesaid scale, entitled to the dignity of an *integer*.

As for the rest of my fancies and reveries—how I lately met with Miss Lesley Baillie, the most beautiful, elegant woman in the world—how I accompanied her

and her father's family fifteen miles on their journey, out of pure devotion, to admire the loveliness of the works of God in such an unequalled display of them —how, as I galloped home at night, I made a ballad on her, of which the two following stanzas are a part :—

Thou, bonie Lesley, art a queen,
Thy subjects we before thee;
Thou, bonie Lesley, art divine,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The very deil he could na scaith
Whatever wad belang thee?
He'd look into thy bonie face
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

—behold all these are written in the chronicles of my imagination, and shall be read by thee, my dear Friend, and by thy beloved spouse, my other dear Friend, at a more convenient season.

Now, to thee and to thy before-designed *bosom*-companion, be given the precious things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things brought forth by the moon, and the benignest influences of the stars, and the living streams which flow from the fountains of life, and by the tree of life for ever and ever! Amen! ROBT. BURNS.*

(?) TO MR. CORBET, SUPERVISOR-GENERAL OF EXCISE.

(DOUGLASS, 1877.)

[DUMFRIES, *Sep.* 1792.]

SIR,—When I was honored with your most obliging letter, I said to myself, "A simple letter of thanks

* The closing paragraph of this long epistle may be compared with a similar one in the letter to Mr. Peter Hill.

will be a very poor return for so much kindness. I shall likewise send the gentleman a cargo of my best and newest rhymes." However, my new division holds me so very busy, and several things in it being rather new to me, my time has hitherto been totally engrossed. When a man is strongly impressed with a sense of something he ought to do, at the same time that want of leisure, or want of opportunity, or want of assistance, or want of information, or want of paper, pen, and ink, or any other of the many wants which flesh is heir to—when sense of duty pulls one way, and necessity (or, alas! too often indolence under necessity's garb) pulls another—you are too well-acquainted with poor human nature to be told what a devil of a life that arch-vixen Conscience leads us.

Old as I am in acquaintance, and growing grey in connexion, with slips, frips, failings, frailties, backslidings in the paths of grace, and all other light-horse militia of iniquity, never did my poor back suffer such scarification from the scourge of Conscience as during these three weeks that your kind epistle has lain by me unanswered. A negro-wench under the rod of a West India mistress, a nurse under the caprices of a spoilt child, the only son and heir of a booby squire; nay, a hen-pecked husband under the displeasure of his virago wife, were enviable predicaments to mine. At last, by way of compromise, I return you by this my most grateful thanks for all the generous friendship and disinterested patronage for which now and formerly I have the honor to be indebted to you, and as to my rhymes—another edition, in two volumes, of my poems being in the press—I shall beg leave to present a copy to Mrs. Corbet as my first, and I will venture to add, most effectual mediator with you on my behalf,—I have the honor to be, &c. R. B.

Early in September 1792 commenced that correspondence betwixt Mr. George Thomson, principal Clerk in the office of the Trustees for the encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, and our Bard, which continued uninterruptedly from that date till the death of the latter. Mr. Thomson was an amateur performer on the violin, who conceived the idea of publishing the select vocal melodies of Scotland, set to new words where the old ones were defective, and embellished with pianoforte accompaniments by the first masters of the art. To Burns that gentleman applied for his aid in improving the old words of popular airs, or in furnishing original words to suit the ancient melodies when necessary. That being an employment very congenial to our poet, he at once sympathised in the scheme, and lent his genius to forward it. We purpose to deal with that lyrical correspondence, as we did with the Clarinda episode, in order to obviate a tediously digressive interruption to the current of our author's general correspondence. We shall therefore defer that branch of our subject till we can take up the Thomson correspondence in its entirety and without impediment.

(34) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, 24*th Sep.* 1792.

I HAVE this moment, my dear Madam, yours of the twenty-third. All your other kind reproaches, your news, &c., are out of my head when I read and think on Mrs. Henri's situation.* Good God! a heart-wounded helpless young woman—in a strange, foreign land, and that land convulsed with every horror that can harrow the human feelings—sick—looking, longing for a comforter, but finding none—a mother's feelings, too—but it is too much: He who wounded—(He only can) may He heal!

* * * * *

* This lady who, as the reader knows, was a daughter of Mrs. Dunlop, had gone to the south of France with her infant son, where she died a few days prior to the date of this letter.

I wish the farmer great joy of his new acquisition to his family. * * * * I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, a *cursed life!* As to a laird farming his own property; sowing his own corn in hope; and reaping it, in spite of brittle weather, in gladness; knowing that none can say unto him, 'what dost thou?'—fattening his herds; shearing his flocks; rejoicing at Christmas; and begetting sons and daughters, until he be the venerated, grey-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! but Devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat!

Well, your kind wishes will be gratified, as to seeing me when I make my Ayrshire visit. I cannot leave Mrs. Burns, until her nine months' race is run, which may perhaps be in three or four weeks. She too seems determined to make me the patriarchal leader of a band. However, if Heaven will be so obliging as let me have them in the proportion of three boys to one girl, I shall be so much the more pleased. I hope, if I am spared with them, to shew a set of boys that will do honor to my cares and name! but I am not equal to the task of rearing girls. Besides, I am too poor—a girl should always have a fortune. Apropos: your little godson is thriving charmingly, but is a very devil. He, though two years younger, has completely mastered his brother. Robert is indeed the mildest, gentlest creature I ever saw. He has a most surprising memory, and is quite the pride of his schoolmaster.

You know how readily we get into prattle upon a subject dear to our heart—you can excuse it. God bless you and yours! R. B.

Notwithstanding the poet's timidity about being a parent of daughters, it so happened that on 21st November of this

year Mrs. Burns brought him a girl, whom he named "Elizabeth Riddell," after the amiable wife of his friend Robert Riddell of Friar's Carse (not, as Chambers has thoughtlessly recorded, after Mrs. Walter Riddell of Woodley Park, whose name was Maria). The child however, was not destined to a long life, for she predeceased her father by ten months, and was buried at Mauchline, whither she had been sent in the hope that change of air might prove beneficial.

(35) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[DUMFRIES, *October* 1792.]

I HAD been from home, and did not receive your letter until my return the other day.* What shall I say to comfort you, my much valued, much afflicted Friend? I can but grieve with you; consolation I have none to offer, except that which Religion holds out to the children of Affliction—(*children of Affliction!* how just the expression!) and like every other family, they have matters among them which they hear, see, and feel in a serious, all-important manner, of which the world has not, nor cares to have, any idea. The world looks indifferently on, makes the passing remark, and proceeds to the next novel occurrence.

Alas, Madam! who would wish for many years! what is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire, and leave us in a night of misery; like the gloom which blots out the stars one by one, from the face of night, and leaves us without a ray of comfort in the howling waste!

I am interrupted, and must leave off. You shall soon hear from me again. R. B.

---

* A letter informing him of the death of her daughter, Mrs. Henri, Sep. 15, 1792. Died "at Muges, Asguillon, Mrs. Henri, widow of the late James Henri, Esq."—*Scots Mag.*

On 14th November 1792, our bard sent to Mr. George Thomson the most pathetic of all his songs—

"Ye banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomerie;"
(*See* page 125, *supra*.)

and on the day immediately preceding he penned and forwarded the following letter, which indicates the dangerous political ground on which Burns was now venturing. On June 20th an armed mob forced into the Tuileries, and insulted the King of France, a riotous procedure which was renewed, with cruel aggravation, on the 10th of August, when the King and Queen took refuge in the House of the National Assembly, from which they were sent to prison in the Temple. The Royal Swiss Guards were massacred, and the King's authority was formally declared at an end. In the beginning of September, Paris flowed with blood for two days, when state-prisoners and all suspected royalists were butchered in the open streets by the infuriated mob; and on 21st September, France was decreed to be a Republic. The combined armies of Austria and Prussia had taken the field with a view to oppose the progress of the French revolution; but, as yet, Britain offered no interference, and the liberal portion of the community, with their political leaders, hitherto seemed to sympathise in the changes that were being effected in France. Paine's "Essay on the Rights of Man" was widely circulated, and numerous societies sprung up, adopting the title of "Friends of the People," to promote "a redress of grievances, and a full, free and equal representation of the people in parliament." Burns, as a matter of course, sided openly with the reforming p rty, although it does not appear that he joined any of the political societies, which Government soon took means to suppress. In Edinburgh, a certain "Captain Wm. Johnstone" issued the prospectus of a new periodical which he proposed to edit, named "The Edinburgh Gazetteer," and Burns addressed a letter to him, intimating his wish to be a subscriber.

(1) TO CAPT. WM. JOHNSTONE, EDINBURGH.

(BLACKIE'S ED., 1846.)

DUMFRIES, 13*th November* 1792.

SIR,—I have just read your Prospectus of the "Edinburgh Gazetteer." If you go on in your paper with the same spirit, it will, beyond all comparison, be the first composition of the kind in Europe. I beg leave to insert my name as a subscriber, and if you have already published any papers, please send me them from the beginning. Point out your own way of settling payments in this place, or I shall settle with you through the medium of my friend, Peter Hill, bookseller in Edinburgh.

Go on, Sir! Lay bare with undaunted heart and steady hand that horrid mass of corruption called politics and state-craft. Dare to draw in their native colors those "calm-thinking villains whom no faith can fire," whatever be the shibboleth of their pretended party.

The address to me at Dumfries will find, Sir, your very humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

(1) TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(DR. WADDELL'S ED., 1869.)

[DUMFRIES, *Nov.* 1792.]

MADAM,—I return you my most sincere thanks for the honor you have done me in presenting me with a copy of your Book.* Be assured I shall ever keep it sacred. * * R. B.

* See page 289 *supra*.

(²) TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[DUMFRIES, *Nov.* 1792.]

I AM thinking to send my "Address" to some periodical publication, but it has not got your sanction: so pray look over it.

As to Tuesday's play, let me beg of you, my dear Madam—let me beg of you to give us "The Wonder, a Woman keeps a Secret;" to which please add "The Spoilt Child." You will highly oblige me by so doing.

Ah, what an enviable creature you are! There now, this cursed gloomy blue-devil day, you are going to a party of choice spirits

> ——"To play the shapes
> Of frolic fancy, and incessant form
> Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
> Of fleet ideas, never joined before,
> Where lively Wit excites to gay surprise;
> Or folly-painting Humor, grave himself,
> Calls laughter forth, deep shaking every nerve."

But as you rejoice with them that do rejoice, do also remember to weep with them that weep, and pity your melancholy friend. R. B.

The "Address" referred to in the above note, was that on "The Rights of Woman," given at page 127, *supra*, which was written for Miss Fontenelle, and delivered by her in Dumfries Theatre on her Benefit-night, 26 Nov. 1792. Burns enclosed it to that lady in the following letter.

([1]) TO MISS FONTENELLE, DUMFRIES.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

MADAM,—In such a bad world as ours, those who add to the scanty sum of our pleasures are positively our benefactors. To you, Madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms as a woman would insure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would insure admiration to the plainest figure. This, Madam, is not the unmeaning or insidious compliment of the frivolous or interested; I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime of Nature excites my admiration, or her beauties give me delight.

Will the foregoing lines be of any service to you in your approaching benefit night? If they will, I shall be prouder of my muse than ever. They are nearly extempore; I know they have no great merit; but though they should add but little to the entertainment of the evening, they give me the happiness of an opportunity to declare how much I have the honor to be, &c. R. B.

([36]) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, 6*th Dec.* 1792.

I SHALL be in Ayrshire, I think, next week; and if at all possible, I shall certainly, my much esteemed Friend, have the pleasure of visiting at Dunlop-house.

Alas, Madam! how seldom do we meet in this world, that we have reason to congratulate ourselves on accessions of happiness! I have not passed half

the ordinary term of an old man's life, and yet I scarcely look over the obituary of a newspaper, that I do not see some names that I have known, and which I, and other acquaintances, little thought to meet with there so soon. Every other instance of the mortality of our kind, makes us cast an anxious look into the dreadful abyss of uncertainty, and shudder with apprehension for our own fate. But of how different an importance are the lives of different individuals? Nay, of what importance is one period of the same life, more than another? A few years ago, I could have lain down in the dust, "careless of the voice of the morning;" and now, not a few, and these most helpless individuals, would, on losing me and my exertions, lose both their "staff and shield." By the way, these helpless ones have lately got an addition; Mrs. B. having given me a fine girl since I wrote you. There is a charming passage in Thomson's *Edward and Eleanora*,

> "The valiant, *in himself*, what can he suffer?
> Or what need he regard his *single* woes," &c.

As I am got in the way of quotations, I shall give you another from the same piece, peculiarly, alas, too peculiarly apposite, my dear Madam, to your present frame of mind;

> "Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him
> With his fair-weather virtue, that exults
> Glad o'er the summer main? The tempest comes,
> The rough winds rage aloud; when from the helm
> This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
> Lamenting—Heavens! if privileged from trial,
> How cheap a thing were virtue!"

I do not remember to have heard you mention Thomson's dramas. I pick up favorite quotations, and store them in my mind as ready armor, offensive, or defensive, amid the struggle of this turbulent exist-

ence. Of these is one, a very favorite one, from his *Alfred*.

> "Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
> And offices of life; to life itself,
> With all its vain and transient joys, sit loose."

Probably I have quoted some of these to you formerly, as indeed when I write from the heart, I am apt to be guilty of such repetitions. The compass of the heart, in the musical style of expression, is much more bounded than that of the imagination; so the notes of the former are extremely apt to run into one another; but in return for the paucity of its compass, its few notes are much more sweet. I must still give you another quotation, which I am almost sure I have given you before, but I cannot resist the temptation. The subject is Religion; speaking of its importance to mankind, the author says—

> "'Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright."
> (*See Letter to same lady—6th Sept.* 1789.)

I see you are in for double postage, so I shall e'en scribble out t'other sheet. We in this country here have many alarms of the reforming, or rather, the republican spirit of your part of the kingdom. Indeed we are a good deal in commotion ourselves. For me, I am a "placeman," you know—a very humble one indeed, Heaven knows, but still so much so as to gag me. What my private sentiments are, you will find out without an interpreter.

* * * * *

I have taken up the subject in another view; and the other day, for a pretty actress's benefit night, I wrote an Address, which I will give on the other page, called

"The Rights of Woman."

I shall have the honor of receiving your criticisms in person at Dunlop. R. B.

(1) TO MISS MARY PEACOCK, EDINBURGH.

(ALDINE EDITION, 1839.)

DUMFRIES, *Dec.* 6, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,—I have written so often to you and have got no answer, that I had resolved never to lift up a pen to you again; but this eventful day, *the sixth of December*, recalls to my memory such a scene! Heaven and earth! when I remember a far-distant person!—but no more of this until I learn from you a proper address, and why my letters have lain by you unanswered, as this is the third I have sent you. The opportunities will be all gone now I fear, of sending over the book I mentioned in my last. Do not write me for a week, as I shall not be at home, but as soon after that as possible—

Ance mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
Ance mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
Dire was the parting thou bidst me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh, ne'er to meet mair!

Yours, R. B.

"Clarinda's" visit to the West Indies, in hopes to accomplish a re-union with her husband, had proved a failure. She was coldly received, and was mortified to find him in the midst of a plentiful brood of young Mulattos who called him father. A medical adviser at same time admonished her that in the present state of her health, she could not long bear the effects of a warm climate. She therefore returned by the same vessel that had brought her, and arrived home in August 1792. It is evident from the preceding letter addressed to the "Mary" of the *Clarinda episode*, that the return of Mrs. M'Lehose was yet unknown to Burns. Chambers regards the date of this letter as an instance of the poet's sensibility to anniversaries, so strongly evidenced in the case of Highland Mary.

About the 12th of December, our bard made a journey into

Ayrshire, resting by the way at his friend Bailie Whigham's Inn at Sanquhar. He seems to have spent a jolly night there, if we are to judge from a song he despatched from thence to his Edinburgh associate, Robert Cleghorn. What his particular errand was does not appear; but he spent four days at Dunlop House, and returned before Christmas to Dumfries, where something not very pleasant was preparing for him.

(5) TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN, SAUGHTON MILLS, EDINBURGH,

ENCLOSING A TIPPLING BALLAD.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

MY DEAR CLEGHORN,—By our good friend Crosbie I send you a song, just finished this moment. May the —— follow with a blessing. Amen!

ROBT. BURNS.

SANQUHAR, 12 *December* 1792.

When Princes and Prelates, and hot-headed zealots
A' Europe had set in a lowe, a lowe,
The poor man lies down, nor envies a crown,
And comforts himself as he dow, dow, dow.

See page 136, *supra*.

Soon after his return to Dumfries, the poor Bard found, to his dismay, that some malicious person or party had lodged information against him with the Excise authorities, in reference to his political opinions and incautious utterances; and the Dumfries Collector was instructed to inquire into the matter, as appears from the following excited letter to Mr. Graham.

(6) TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

DUMFRIES, *Decem.* 1792.

SIR,—I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted by Mr. Mitchell, the Collector, telling me that

he has received an order from your Board* to enquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to government.

Sir, you are a husband and a father. You know what you would feel to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas! Sir, must I think that such soon will be my lot! and from the d—d dark insinuations of hellish, groundless Envy too! I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head, and I say that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next after my God, I am most devoutly attached! You, Sir, have been much and generously my friend. Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you. Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependence. I would not, for my single self, call on your humanity; were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would despise the tear that now swells in my eye—I could brave misfortune, I could face ruin; for at the worst, "Death's thousand doors stand open:" but, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve courage, and wither resolution! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due: to these,

* The Commissioners at that period were George Brown, Thomas Wharton, James Stodart, Robert Graham (of Fintry,) and John Grieve, Esqrs.

Sir, permit me to appeal; by these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me, and which, with my latest breath I will say it, I have not deserved. R. B.

The foregoing letter, in the opinion of one of the poet's fondest admirers—Dr. Hately Waddell—is deficient in dignity, and forms, in that respect, a marked contrast with the next letter (10) to the same correspondent, on the same topic.

A.D. 1793.

(87) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

DUMFRIES, *Dec.* 31, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,—A hurry of business, thrown in heaps by my absence, has until now prevented my returning my grateful acknowledgements to the good family of Dunlop, and you in particular, for that hospitable kindness which rendered the four days I spent under that genial roof, four of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed.—Alas, my dearest Friend! how few and fleeting are those things we call pleasures! On my road to Ayrshire, I spent a night with a friend whom I much valued; a man whose days promised to be many; and on Saturday last we laid him in the dust!

[*Jan.* 2, 1793.]

I have just received yours of the 30th, and feel much for your situation. However, I heartily rejoice in your prospect of recovery from that vile jaundice. As to myself, I am better, though not quite free of my complaint. You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and

again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned; it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard-drinking gentlemen of this country, that do me the mischief—but even this I have more than half given over.

Mr. Corbet can be of little service to me at present; at least I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled as a supervisor, for several years. I must wait the rotation of the list, and there are twenty names before mine. I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled supervisor was ill, or aged; but that hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious devil has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my supervisors. I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you, I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in everything else, I shall show the undisguised emotions of my soul. War I deprecate; misery and ruin to thousands are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But

* * * * *

(CURRIE, 1800.)

5th January 1793.

You see my hurried life, Madam: I can only command starts of time; however, I am glad of one thing; since I finished the other sheet, the political blast that threatened my welfare is overblown. I have corresponded with Commissioner Graham, for the board had made me the subject of their animadversions; and now I have the pleasure of informing you, that all is set to rights in that quarter. Now as to these informers, may the devil be let loose to—— but hold! I was praying most fervently in my last sheet, and I must not so soon fall aswearing in this.

Alas! how little do the wantonly or idly officious

think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless blabbings. What a difference there is in intrinsic worth, candor, benevolence, generosity, kindness,—in all the charities and all the virtues, between one class of human beings and another! For instance, the amiable circle I so lately mixed with in the hospitable hall of Dunlop, their generous hearts—their uncontaminated, dignified minds—their informed and polished understandings—what a contrast, when compared—if such comparing were not downright sacrilege—with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him, and with a grin of satisfaction see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife, and prattling innocents, turned over to beggary and ruin!

Your cup, my dear Madam, arrived safe. I had two worthy fellows dining with me the other day, when I, with great formality, produced my whigmeleerie cup,* and told them that it had been a family-piece among the descendants of Sir William Wallace. This roused such an enthusiasm that they insisted on bumpering the punch round in it; and by and by, never did your great ancestor lay a *Suthron* more completely to rest, than for a time did your cup my two friends. Apropos, this is the season of wishing. May God bless you, my dear Friend, and bless me, the humblest and sincerest of your friends, by granting you yet many returns of the season! May all good things attend you and yours, wherever they are scattered over the earth! R. B.

The concluding paragraph of this letter refers to a curious incident that used to be related by the Rev. Mr. M'Morine,

* This cup, of cocoa-nut mounted on a stalk and rimmed with silver, fell into the possession of the late Archibald Hastie, Esq., M. P. for Paisley, the owner also of the poet's punch-bowl of Inverary marble, now in the British Museum, London.

of Caerlaverock. Burns had met him on the second of January and engaged him to come to his house next forenoon to baptise his recently born infant; and the minister came accordingly, but perhaps at an earlier hour than he was expected. On being shewn into Burns's parlor, he found a party composed of the poet and two companions, who had evidently sat since the previous evening. The description which the clergyman gave of the two visitors corresponds exactly with what Burns hints at in his account of the "whigmeleerie cup." The poet seemed taken by surprise, but in perfect possession of himself, and he very quickly put matters in decent order for the performance of the baptismal ceremony. Chambers, whose narration we borrow, remarks that "Mr. M'Morine, though he clung to Burns's friendship when others of the district clergymen looked coldly on him, used to relate the story with an unfavorable leaning towards the poet. He was shocked by the idea of so prolonged a debauch, and thought meanly of the appearance of the two guests. But he was not aware that there was a special feeling about the *Wallace Cup* which had operated in promoting the conviviality, not to speak of the recognised licence of the New-year season, and in Burns's eyes, his companions were 'two worthy fellows.'"

([10]) TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY.

(CHAMBERS, 1856.)

DUMFRIES, *5th Jan.* 1793.

SIR,—I am this moment honored with your letter: with what feelings I received this other instance of your goodness, I shall not pretend to describe.

Now to the charges which malice and misrepresentation have brought against me. It has been said, it seems, that I not only belong to, but head a disaffected party in this place. I know of no party in this place, either Republican or Reform, except an old party of Burgh-reform, with which I never had anything to do. Individuals, both republican and reform, we have, though not many of either: but if they have associated, it is more than I have the least knowledge

of, and if there exists such an association, it must consist of such obscure, nameless beings, as precludes any possibility of my being known to them, or they to me.

I was in the playhouse one night when *CA IRA* was called for. I was in the middle of the pit, and from the pit the clamor arose. One or two individuals, with whom I occasionally associate, were of the party, but I neither knew of the plot, nor joined in the plot, nor ever opened my lips either to hiss or huzza *that*, or any other political tune whatever. I looked on myself as far too obscure a man to have any weight in quelling a riot, and at the same time, as a character of higher respectability than to yell to the howlings of a rabble. This was the conduct of all the first characters in the place; and these characters know, and will avow, that such was my conduct.*

I never uttered any invectives against the king. His private worth it is altogether impossible that such a man as I can appreciate; but in his public capacity I always revered, and always will, with the soundest loyalty, revere the monarch of GREAT BRITAIN, as (to speak in Masonic) the sacred KEYSTONE of OUR ROYAL ARCH CONSTITUTION.

As to REFORM PRINCIPLES, I look upon the British Constitution, as settled at the Revolution, to be the

* It is pleasant to find the poet so candidly recording this incident, which has so often, since then, been told by unfavorable reporters with undue exaggeration. The reader may be amused with the following, which was sent to Allan Cunningham by Mr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, and has not yet appeared in print. But as Mr. Sharpe says nothing about "Cà Ira," he may refer to a different incident.

"I think you do human nature injustice as to malicious people entrapping Burns in his political conversations; for I know that he was most woefully indiscreet on that point, and I remember one proof. We were at the play in Dumfries, in October 1792—the Caledonian Hunt being then in the town. The play was 'As you like it'; Miss Fontenelle, *Rosalind*, when 'God save the King' was called for and sung; we all stood up uncovered, but Burns sat still in the middle of the pit with his hat on his head. There was a great tumult, with shouts of 'Turn him out!—shame, Burns,' &c., which continued a good while. At last he was either expelled or forced to take off his hat—I forget which; nor can my mother remember. This silly conduct all sensible persons condemned."

most glorious Constitution on earth, or that perhaps the wit of man can frame; at the same time, I think —and you know what high and distinguished characters have for some time thought so—that we have a good deal deviated from the original principles of that Constitution; particularly, that an alarming system of corruption has pervaded the connexion between the Executive power and the House of Commons. This is the truth, and the whole truth, of my Reform opinions, which, before I was aware of the complexion of these innovating times, I, too unguardedly (now I see it) sported with; but henceforth I seal up my lips. However, I never dictated to, corresponded with, or had the least connexion with any political association whatever—except that when the magistrates and principal inhabitants of this town met to declare their attachment to the Constitution, and their abhorrence of riot, which declaration you would see in the papers, I—as I thought my duty as a subject at large, and a citizen in particular, called upon me—subscribed the same declaratory creed.

Of Johnstone, the publisher of the "*Edinburgh Gazetteer*," I know nothing. One evening, in company with four or five friends, we met with his Prospectus, which we thought manly and independent; and I wrote to him ordering his paper for us. If you think that I act improperly in allowing his paper to come addressed to me, I shall immediately countermand it. I never, so judge me God! wrote a line of prose for the *Gazetteer* in my life. An occasional address, spoken by Miss Fontenelle on her benefit night here, which I called "The Rights of Woman," I sent to the *Gazetteer*, as also some extempore stanzas on the commemoration of Thomson; both of these I will subjoin for your perusal. You will see they have nothing whatever to do with politics. At the time when I sent Johnston one of these poems (but which

one I do not remember), I enclosed, at the request of my warm and worthy friend, Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, a prose essay signed Cato, written by him, and addressed to the delegates for County Reform, of which he was one for this County. With the merits or demerits of that essay, I have nothing to do, farther than transmitting it in the same frank, which frank he procured me.

As to France, I was her enthusiastic votary in the beginning of the business. When she came to show her old avidity for conquest, in annexing Savoy, &c., to her dominions,* and invading the rights of Holland, I altered my sentiments. A tippling ballad which I made, on Prince of Brunswick's breaking up his camp, and sung one convivial evening, I shall likewise send you, sealed up, as it is not for everybody's reading. This last is not worth your perusal; but lest Mrs. Fame should, as she has already done, use and even abuse her old privilege of lying, you shall be the master of everything, *le pour et le contre*, of my political writings and conduct.

This, my honored Patron, is all. To this statement I challenge disquisition. Mistaken prejudice, or unguarded passion, may mislead, and have often misled me; but when called on to answer for my mistakes, though—I will say it—no man can feel keener compunction for his errors, yet I trust, no man can be more superior to evasion or disguise.

I shall do myself the honor to thank Mrs. Graham for her goodness in a separate letter.

If, Sir, I have been so fortunate as to do away with these misapprehensions of my conduct and character, I shall, with the confidence which you were wont to allow me, apply to your goodness on every opening in the way of business where I think I with propriety

* Savoy was annexed to France, 27th November 1792.

may offer myself—An instance that occurs just now. Mr. M'Farlane, Supervisor of the Galloway district, is and has been for sometime very ill. I spoke to Mr. Mitchell as to his wishes to forward my application for the job; but though he expressed, and ever does express, every kindness for me, he hesitates, in hopes that the disease may be of short continuance. However, as it seems to be a paralytic affection, I fear that it may be some time ere he can take charge of so extended a district. There is a great deal of fatigue and very little business in the district—two things suitable enough to my hardy constitution, and inexperience in that line of life.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your ever grateful, and as highly obliged, humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

(3) TO MRS. GRAHAM OF FINTRY.

(CHAMBERS, 1856.)

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN,*

An Occasional Address, spoken by Miss Fontenelle on her Benefit night, 26 Novr. 1792.

See page 127, *supra.*

To Mrs. Graham of Fintry, this little Poem, written in haste on the spur of the occasion, and therefore inaccurate, but a sincere compliment to that sex, the *most amiable of the works of God*, is most respectfully presented by THE AUTHOR.

DUMFRIES, 5 *Jan.* 1793.

* The title and subject adopted by Burns in this Theatrical Address are intimately associated with the name of Mary Wollstonecraft, an interesting authoress, cotemporary with Burns, whose life and writings are still remembered with respect. Like Clarinda, she was born in the same year with our poet, and like her was a strange compound of religious enthusiasm and romantic devotion to the object of her fancy. At the age of thirty-two, in the same year that

At this unhappy period, the bard looked to his Muse for consolation. Jean Lorimer, about the beginning of 1793, came to reside in Dumfries, and the spell of her charms was soon thrown over him. During this month he produced the beautiful songs "Gala Water," "Poortith Cauld," and "Lord Gregory." Above all, on the morning of his own Birthday, the following sweet sonnet was suggested to him on hearing a thrush utter its melting notes amid the bleakness of winter.

Sing on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bard, I listen to thy strain;
See aged Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrow'd brow.

So, in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light unanxious heart;
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring ought to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys—
What Wealth could neither give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of Poverty and care,
The mite high Heaven bestowed, that mite with thee I'll share.

We may now consider that the "political blast which threatened our Bard's welfare is overblown," and everything "set to rights with the Board;" even under the cruel impediment that "all hopes of his getting officially forward are blasted." The following amusing letter from his old friend William Nicol of the High School, Edinburgh, will indicate what kind of rumors had reached "the buckish tradesmen and stately patricians" of the capital about the affair.

Paine produced his "Rights of Man," she published "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman." The book is an appeal against Rousseau's theory that women were made for the pleasure of man, and that their education should fit them to be our mistresses rather than our companions. It protests against the false gallantries which lower women under pretext of raising them, and claims for them a perfect social and political equality with man. She had hitherto lived a blameless single life; but, attracted by the inviting aspect of the dawn of the French Revolution, she removed from London to Paris, where, in the spring of 1793, she attached herself to, and lived with, Gilbert Imlay, an American, who eventually turned out to be a heartless fellow. He deserted her after the birth of a child, and returning to London, she attempted to drown herself about the close of 1795. She was rescued, and six months thereafter became the wife of the eccentric William Godwin. On 10th September 1797 she died in giving birth to a daughter, who afterwards became the wife of the poet Shelley, and survived to 1851.

MR. WILLIAM NICOL TO ROBERT BURNS.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

EDINBURGH, 10*th February* 1793.

DEAR CHRISTLESS BOBBIE,—What is become of thee? Has the Devil flown off with thee, as the gled does with a bird? If he should do so there is little matter, if the reports concerning thy *imprudence* are true. What concerns it thee whether the lousy Dumfriesian fiddlers play "Cà Ira," or "God save the King"? Suppose you *had* an aversion to the King, you could not, as a gentleman, wish God to use him worse than he has done. The infliction of idiocy is no sign of Friendship, or Love; and I am sure damnation is a matter far beyond your wishes or ideas. But reports of this kind are only the insidious suggestions of ill-minded persons; for your good sense will ever point out to you, as well as to me, a bright model of political conduct, who flourished in the victorious reign of Queen Anne, viz., the Vicar of Bray, who, during the convulsions of Great Britain which were without any former example, saw eight reigns, in perfect security; because he remembered that precept of the *sensible*, *shrewd*, *temporising* Apostle, "We ought not to resist the Higher Powers."

You will think I have gotten a pension from the Government; but I assure you, no such a thing has been offered me. In this respect my vanity prompts me to say, they have not been so *wise* as I would have wished them to be; for I think their Honors have often employed as impotent scribblers.

---

* We print this letter in the type of the text, because Burns inscribed it in his own holograph, among his own letters in the Glenriddell collection. The reader has here an opportunity to judge of the correctness of Lockhart's estimate of Nicol's letters, quoted in our footnote at page 305, Vol. II.

Enough of Politics. What is become of Mrs. Burns and the dear bairns? How is my Willie? Tell her, though I do not write often my best wishes shall ever attend her and the family. My wife, who is in a high devotional fit this evening, wishes that she and her children may be reckoned the favorites of the Lord, and numbered with the elect. She indeed leaves your honor and me to shift for ourselves; as, so far as she can judge from the criteria laid down in Guthrie's "Trial of a Saving Interest" that both you and I are stamped with the marks of Reprobation.

May all the curses from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation light, materially and effectually, on thy enemies; and may all the blessings of the Covenant be eminently exemplified in thy person, to the glory of a forgiving Deity!

Here, or elsewhere, I am always thine sincerely,

WILLM. NICOL.

The above letter is introduced under the following heading:—"From my worthy friend, Mr. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, alluding to some temeraire conduct of mine, in the political opinions of the day." Burns made the following reply, which has hitherto been misplaced in the chronology of our author's correspondence.

(*) TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL, EDINBURGH.

(CURRIE, 1800, in part, and here completed).

DUMFRIES, *20th Feb.* 1793.

O THOU, wisest among the Wise, meridian blaze of Prudence, full-moon of Discretion, and chief of many Counsellors! How infinitely is thy puddle-headed, rattle-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy super-eminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude, thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the

zig-zag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units, up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, straight as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration descending from the holy and undefiled Priesthood against the head of the Unrighteous,—may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favor of that father of Proverbs and master of Maxims, that antipode of Folly, and magnate among the Sages, the wise and witty Willie Nicol! Amen! Amen! Yea, so be it!

For me! I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing! From the cave of my ignorance, amid the fogs of my dulness, and pestilential fumes of my political heresies, I look up to thee, as doth a toad through the iron-barred lucerne of a pestiferous dungeon, to the cloudless glory of a summer sun! Sorely sighing in bitterness of soul, I say, When shall my name be the quotation of the wise, and my countenance be the delight of the godly, like the illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills?* As for him, his works are perfect: never did the pen of Calumny blur the fair page of his reputation, nor the bolt of Hatred fly at his dwelling. At his approach is the standing up of men, even the Chiefs and the Rulers; and before his presence the frail form of lovely Woman, humbly awaiting his pleasure, is extended on the dust.

Thou mirror of Purity, when shall the elfin-lamp of my glimmerous understanding, purged from sensual appetites and gross desires, shine like the constellation of thy intellectual powers!—As for thee, thy thoughts are pure, and thy lips are holy. Never did the unhallowed breath of the powers of darkness, and the pleasures of darkness, pollute the sacred flame of

* The reference here is to a small estate called Laggan, in the parish of Glencairn, Dumfriesshire, near Maxwellton, bought by Nicol in 1790.

thy sky-descended and heavenward desires; never did the vapors of impurity stain the unclouded serene of thy cerulean imagination. O that like thine were the tenor of my life, like thine the tenor of my conversation! then should no friend fear for my strength, no enemy rejoice in my weakness! Then should I lie down and rise up, and none to make me afraid. May thy pity and thy prayer be exercised for—O thou lamp of Wisdom and mirror of Morality!

Thy devoted slave, ROBT. BURNS.

([11]) TO ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

DUMFRIES, 20*th Feb.* 1793.

WHAT are you doing? What hurry have you got on your head, my dear Cunningham, that I have not heard from you? Are you deeply engaged in the mazes of the law, the mysteries of love, or in the profound wisdom of modern politics?—Curse on the word which ended the period!

Quere.—What is Politics?

Answer.—Politics is a science wherewith, by means of nefarious cunning and hypocritical pretence, we govern civil politics for the emolument of ourselves and adherents.

Quere.—What is a Minister?

Answer.—A Minister is an unprincipled fellow, who, by the influence of hereditary or acquired wealth—by superior abilities, or by a lucky conjuncture of cir-

* The holograph was in the possession of the late James Cunningham, Esq., W. S., son of the poet's correspondent. The father died in 1812, and the son in 1878.

cumstances, obtains a principal place in the administration of the affairs of government.

Quere.—What is a Patriot?

Answer.—A Patriot is an individual exactly of the same description as a Minister, only out of place.

I am interrupted in my catechism, and am returned at a late hour, just to subscribe my name, to put you in mind that there is a forgotten friend of yours of that name, still in the land of the living, though I can hardly say, "in the place of hope."

I made the following Sonnet the other day, which has been so lucky as to obtain the approbation of no ordinary judge—our friend Syme.

"*Sonnet on hearing a thrush in a morning walk, 25th January*, 1793."

Adieu, ROBT. BURNS.

(3) TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[DUMFRIES, *Feb.* 1793.]

MADAM,—You were so very good as to promise me to honor my friend with your presence on his benefit night. That night is fixed for Friday first; the play a most interesting one—"The way to keep him." I have the pleasure to know Mr. G. very well. His merit as an actor is generally acknowledged. He has genius and worth which would do honor to patronage: he is a poor and modest man; claims which, from their very *silence*, have the more forcible power on the generous heart. Alas, for pity! that through the indolence of those who have the good things of life in their gift, too often does brazen-fronted importunity snatch that boon, the rightful due of retiring humble want! Of all the qualities we assign to the Author and Director of Nature, by far the most enviable is—

to be able "to wipe away all tears from all eyes." O what insignificant, sordid wretches are they, however chance may have loaded them with wealth, who go to their graves, to their magnificent mausoleums, with hardly the consciousness of having made one poor, honest heart happy!

But I crave your pardon, Madam; I came to beg, not to preach, R. B.

(3) TO WILLIAM CREECH, ESQ., BOOKSELLER.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

DUMFRIES, 28*th Feb.* 1793.

SIR,—I understand that my book is published, I beg that you will, as soon as possible, send me twenty copies of it. As I mean to present them among a few Great Folk whom I respect, and a few Little Folk whom I love; these twenty will not interfere with your sale. If you have not twenty copies ready, send me any number you can. It will confer a particular obligation to let me have them by first carrier.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient, humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

(4) TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ., DRUMLANRIG.

WITH THE NEW EDITION OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL'S ED., 1835.)

DUMFRIES, *March* 1793.

WILL Mr. M'Murdo do me the favor to accept of these volumes? a trifling but sincere mark of the very high respect I bear for his worth as a man, his man-

* From the holograph of the poet, in possession of Mr. Creech's relatives.

ners as a gentleman, and his kindness as a friend. However inferior now, or afterwards, I may rank as a poet, one honest virtue to which few poets can pretend, I trust I shall ever claim as mine—to no man, whatever his station in life, or his power to serve me, have I ever paid a compliment at the expense of TRUTH,

THE AUTHOR.

(1) TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN,*

WITH THE NEW EDITION OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

DUMFRIES, *March* 1793.

MY LORD,—When you cast your eye on the name at the bottom of this letter, and on the title page of the book I do myself the honor to send your Lordship, a more pleasurable feeling than my vanity tells me that it must be a name not entirely unknown to you. The generous patronage of your late illustrious brother found me in the utmost obscurity: he introduced my rustic muse to the partiality of my country; and to him I owe all. My sense of his goodness, and the anguish of my soul at losing my truly noble protector and friend, I have endeavored to express in a poem to his memory, which I have now published. This edition is just from the press; and in my gratitude to the dead and my respect for the living (Fame belies you, my Lord, if you possess not the same dignity of man, which was your noble brother's characteristic feature), I had destined a copy for the Earl of Glencairn. I learnt just now that you are in town: allow me to present it you.

I know, my Lord, such is the vile, venal contagion

* John, 15th Earl; see notice of him, page 247, *supra*.

which pervades the whole world of letters, that professions of respect from an author, particularly from a Poet to a Lord, are more than suspicious. I claim my by-past conduct, and my feelings at this moment, as exceptions to the too just conclusion. Exalted as are the honors of your Lordship's name, and unnoted as is the obscurity of mine, with the uprightness of an honest man I come before your Lordship, with an offering, however humble—'tis all I have to give—of my grateful respect; and to beg of you, my Lord—'tis all I have to ask of you—that you will do me the honor to accept of it.

I have the honor to be, your Lordship's humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

(3) TO MRS. GRAHAM OF FINTRY.

WITH THE NEW EDITION OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

(WALKER'S ED., 1811.)

DUMFRIES, *March* 1793.

IT is probable, Madam, that this page may be read when the hand that now writes it shall be mouldering in the dust: may it then bear witness that I present you these volumes as a tribute of gratitude on my part ardent and sincere, as your and Mr. Graham's goodness to me has been generous and noble! May every child of yours, in the hour of need, find such a friend as I shall teach every child of mine, that their father found in you! ROBT. BURNS.

(4) TO ROBT. RIDDELL, ESQ., OF GLENRIDDELL,

WITH THE NEW EDITION OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

DUMFRIES, *March* 1793.

WHEN you and I, my dear Sir, have passed that bourne whence no traveller returns, should these volumes survive us, I wish the future reader of this page to be informed that they are the pledge of Friendship, ardent and grateful on my part, as it was kind and generous on yours. That Enjoyment may mark your days, and Pleasure number your years, is the earnest prayer of, my dear Sir —Your much indebted Friend,

THE AUTHOR.

Among the documents which passed through the hands of Dr. Currie, but were not used by him in his edition of the "Life and Works of Burns," was a letter addressed to the poet at this period by Miss Deborah Duff Davies—the "Bonie wee Thing" of his well-known lyric—who had removed to France for the sake of its milder climate. We nowhere find the date of her death recorded, but apparently she did not outlive Burns. The "Mr. Gordon" mentioned in her letter was the Hon. Adam Gordon, who, after the lady's decease, sent the following lines to Dr. Maxwell of Dumfries, as her epitaph :—

"The boisterous world was never meant for thee,
Fair bud of virtuous sensibility!
On Earth no longer God would let her stay,
And fondly called her to Himself away:
The mandate she obeyed, well satisfied,
And—loved by all, by all lamented—died."

MISS DEBORAH D. DAVIES TO ROBERT BURNS.

(Douglas, 1877.)

Sir,—How can I return you thanks for one favor, when I mean to solicit another?—which is, that you will be so indulgent as to send me a copy of the song you shewed to me at Woodley Park—copied by your own hand, to render it more valuable. I might get it from the Collection,* but that is not what I wish; as you flattered me by saying that you had some faint idea of my insignificant person when you wrote it. You will laugh at my credulity, as it might have been written on one more worthy of the encomiums you have bestowed in it upon the person you had in view. If this is the case, I still think it has so much merit and simplicity in it, and the thoughts altogether so new, that I cannot help admiring it.

And now give me leave to thank you for the favors I this morning received by Mr. Gordon, which I shall carefully keep in remembrance, as a flattering proof of your attention that can never be obliterated from the mind of D. D. Davies.

Fontainbleau, *March* 14, 1793.

The foregoing reached the hands of Mr. Douglas while his edition of 1877 was in course of publication, see page 271 *supra*. Accompanying the lady's letter is the Epitaph in the handwriting of Mr. Gordon, together with a lock of brown hair, supposed to be that of "Lovely Davies." See also page 38 *supra*.

(?) TO MISS BENSON, YORK.†

(Currie, 1800.)

Dumfries, 21*st of March* 1793.

Madam,—Among many things for which I envy those hale long-lived old fellows before the flood, is

* Johnson's Museum, song 341, or "Lovely Davies," song 349.
† Afterwards Mrs. Basil Montague.

this in particular, that when they met with anybody after their own heart, they had a charming long prospect of many, many happy meetings with them in after-life.

Now in this short, stormy winter day of our fleeting existence, when you now and then, in the Chapter of Accidents, meet an individual whose acquaintance is a real acquisition, there are all the probabilities against you, that you shall never meet with that valued character more. On the other hand, brief as this miserable being is, it is none of the least of the miseries belonging to it, that if there is any miscreant whom you hate, or creature whom you despise, the ill-run of the chances shall be so against you, that in the overtakings, turnings and jostlings of life, pop! at some unlucky corner, eternally comes the wretch upon you, and will not allow your indignation or contempt a moment's repose. As I am a sturdy believer in the Powers of darkness, I take these to be the doings of that old author of mischief, the Devil. It is well-known that he has some kind of short-hand way of taking down our thoughts, and I make no doubt that he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments respecting Miss Benson; how much I admired her abilities and valued her worth, and how very fortunate I thought myself in her acquaintance. For this last reason, my dear Madam, I must entertain no hopes of the very great pleasure of meeting with you again.

Miss Hamilton* tells me that she is sending a

* Daughter of Captain Hamilton, his landlord, a connexion of Mr. Craik of Arbigland, *see* page 366, Vol. III. It was at Arbigland that the poet met with Miss Benson, who thus recorded a reminiscence of that meeting:—"I dined with Mr. Burns at Arbigland; he was witty, drank as others drank, and was long in coming to the tea-table. It was then the fashion for young ladies to be busy with something—I was working a flower, and asked the poet if he would do a bit of my work. 'Oh,' said he, 'you think my hand is unsteady with wine, I cannot work a flower, Madam, but I can thread a needle.' He pulled the thread from the needle, and re-threaded it in a moment—'Can a tipsy man do that?' He talked to me of his children, particularly his eldest boy, whom he praised as a lad of promise. 'And yet, Madam,' he said with a sarcastic glance, 'I hope he will turn out a glorious blockhead, and so make his fortune.'"

packet to you, and I beg leave to send you the enclosed Sonnet,* though, to tell you the real truth, the sonnet is a mere pretence, that I may have the opportunity of declaring with how much respectful esteem I have the honor to be, &c., R. B.

(1) TO THE HON. THE LORD PROVOST, BAILIES, AND TOWN COUNCIL OF DUMFRIES.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

March 1793.

MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,—The literary taste and liberal spirit of your good town has so ably filled the various departments of your schools, as to make it a very great object for a parent to have his children educated in them. Still, to me, a stranger, with my large family, and very stinted income, to give my young ones that education I wish, at the high school-fees which a stranger pays, will bear hard upon me.

Some years ago your good town did me the honor of making me an Honorary Burgess.—Will your honors allow me to request that this mark of distinction may extend so far, as to put me on the footing of a real Freeman of the Town, in the schools?

That I may not appear altogether unworthy of this favor, allow me to state to you some little services I have lately done to a branch of your revenue. The two-pennies exigible on foreign ale vended within your limits—in this rather neglected article of your income I am ready to shew that, within these few weeks, my exertions have secured for you of those duties nearly the sum of Ten pounds; and in this too, I was the only one of the gentlemen of the Excise (except Mr.

* The Sonnet was probably that on his own birthday, 1793.

Mitchell, whom *you pay* for his trouble) who took the least concern in the business.*

If you are so very kind as to grant my request, it will certainly be a constant incentive to me to strain every nerve where, in that or any other way, I can officially serve you; and will, if possible, increase that grateful respect with which I have the honor to be,

My Lord and Gentlemen, your devoted, humble servt.

ROBT. BURNS.

The prayer of the petition was immediately granted, and the poet's eldest boy Robert, then seven years old, was received into the Academy or Grammar School of the burgh.

(3) TO MR. WHITE, TEACHER, DUMFRIES ACADEMY,

WITH THE NEW EDITION OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

April 1793.

MR. WHITE will accept of this Book as a mark of the most sincere Friendship from a man who has ever had too much respect for his Friends, and too much contempt for his enemies, to flatter either the one or the other,

THE AUTHOR.

(1) TO PATRICK MILLER, ESQ., OF DALSWINTON,

WITH THE NEW EDITION OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

DUMFRIES, *April*, 1793.

SIR,—My poems having just come out in another edition, will you do me the honor to accept of a copy?

* This paragraph, which perhaps is not in the best of taste, had been omitted by previous editors till Dr. Waddell inserted it. Our collation has been made from the original MS. in the British Museum, London.

A mark of my gratitude to you, as a gentleman to whose goodness I have been much indebted; of my respect for you, as a patriot who, in a venal, sliding age, stands forth the champion of the liberties of my country; and of my veneration for you as a man, whose benevolence of heart does honor to human nature.

There *was* a time, Sir, when I was your dependant; this language *then* would have been like the vile incense of flattery—I could not have used it. Now that that connexion is at an end, do me the honor to accept of this *honest* tribute of respect from, Sir, your much indebted, humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

Notwithstanding his assertion in January of this year to Mrs. Dunlop, that henceforth he would "set a seal on his lips as to these unlucky politics," Burns was by no means a silent observer of the progress of events in France. When Dumouriez, after achieving great victories over the armed enemies of the Republic, suddenly deserted the French army, on April 5, 1793, some person in the poet's hearing having expressed joy over that renegade step, as a triumph to the cause of order, Burns immediately chanted his well-known parody of "Robin Adair," improvised on the spot:—

"You 're welcome to Despots, Dumouriez."

See page 160, *supra*.

John Francis Erskine, Esq., of Mar, grandson of the rebel earl of 1715, and recently restored to his ancestral privileges, having been told that Burns was placed under a species of official persecution in consequence of the liberality of his opinions, put himself in communication with Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell, expressing his sympathy for the poet, and suggesting means to relieve him from his thraldom. This brought forth a grateful letter from Burns addressed to Mr. Erskine, characterised by Dr. Currie as displaying "great elevation of sentiment," in which, while giving an account of the whole transaction, he "defends himself from the imputation of disloyalty on the one hand, and from the charge of having made unworthy submissions on the other hand, for the sake of his office." We take the text of that letter from the Glenriddell MSS., where the author has headed it with the following Preface, hitherto unpublished.

(1) TO JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE, ESQ., OF MAR.

(CURRIE and CROMEK, in part, and completed, DOUGLAS, 1877.)

IN the year 1792–93, when Royalist and Jacobin had set all Britain by the ears—because I unguardedly, rather under the temptation of being witty than disaffected, had declared my sentiments in favor of Parliamentary Reform, in the manner of that time, I was accused to the Board of Excise of being a Republican, and was very near being turned adrift in the wide world on that account, Mr. Erskine of Mar, a *gentleman* indeed, wrote to my friend Glenriddell to know if I was really out of place on account of my political principles, and if so, he proposed a subscription among the friends of Liberty for me, which he offered to head, that I might be no pecuniary loser by my political Integrity. This was the more generous, as I had not the honor of being known to Mr. Erskine.* I wrote to him as follows :—

DUMFRIES, 13*th April*, 1793.

SIR,—Degenerate as human nature is said to be—and in many instances worthless and unprincipled it certainly is—still there are bright examples to the contrary ; examples that, even in the eyes of superior beings, must shed a lustre on the name of man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, Sir, came forward to patronize and befriend a distant, obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardihood of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you.

* Died at Edinburgh, Aug. 21, 1825, the Right Hon. John Francis Erskine, Earl of Mar.—*Scots Mag.*

Accept, Sir, of the silent throb of gratitude! For words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismission from the Excise; I am still in the service.—Indeed, but for the exertions of a gentleman who must be known to you, Mr. Graham of Fintry, a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend, I had, without so much as a hearing, or the smallest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismissal; but the little money I gained by my publication is, almost every guinea, embarked to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men.

In my defence to their accusations, I said, that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain, I abjured the idea!—That a CONSTITUTION which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory,—that, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally, or as an author, in the present business of REFORM; but that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious CONSTITUTION; and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended.—Some such sentiments as these I stated in a letter to my generous patron, Mr. Graham, which he laid before the Board at large; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence; and one of our supervisors-general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed

to enquire on the spot, into my conduct, and to document me,—"that *my* business was to *act*, not to think; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be silent and obedient."

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven: only, I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted.

Now, Sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my countrymen has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a Character to support. In the Poet I have avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the Man. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and children, have pointed out as the eligible, and indeed, the only eligible line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my dearest concern; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of the degrading epithets that Malice or Misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney magazine scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exulting in his hireling paragraphs that "Burns, notwithstanding the fanfaronade of Independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view and to public estimation as a man of some genius; yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry Exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to lodge my strong disavowal, and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods. Burns was a poor man from birth, and an exciseman by necessity; but I will say it! the

sterling of his honest worth no poverty could debase, and his independent British mind, oppression might bend, but could not subdue. Have not I, to me, a more precious stake in my country's welfare than the richest dukedom in it?—I have a large family of children, and the probability of more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of SLAVES.—Can I look tamely on, and see any machination to wrest from them the birthright of my boys—the little independent BRITONS, in whose veins runs my own blood?—No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream around my attempt to defend it!

Does any man tell me, that my feeble efforts can be of no service, and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concerns of a people? I tell him, that it is on such individuals as I that, for the hand of support and the eye of intelligence, a nation has to rest. The uniformed MOB may swell a nation's bulk; and the titled, tinsel, courtly throng may be its feathered ornament; but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and to reflect, and yet low enough to keep clear of the venal contagion of a court!—these are a nation's strength.

One small request more—when you have honored this letter with a perusal, please commit it to the flames. BURNS, in whose behalf you have so generously interested yourself, I have here in his native colors drawn as he is; but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats get the least knowledge of the picture, it would ruin the poor BARD for ever!

My poems having just come out in another edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy, as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent gratitude, with which I have the honor to be, Sir, your deeply indebted, and ever devoted humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

On the first of February preceding, the French Convention had declared war against Great Britain,—just ten days after they had beheaded the unfortunate king of France; and from that time more or less during upwards of twenty years, was embroiled in a martial struggle with that country both by sea and land. In the month of April, our poet composed one of his tenderest ballads:—"The Sodger's Return," hopefully looking forward to a day he did not live to see—

> "When wild War's deadly blast is blawn,
> And gentle Peace returning."

The pathetic picture in Professor Fergusson's house which brought the tear into his eye in presence of young Walter Scott, recurred to his thoughts when he framed the couplet which completes the opening stanza of the ballad:—

> "Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
> And mony a widow mourning."

([13]) MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

(CHAMBERS, 1852, in part, and completed DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

DUMFRIES, *April* 1793.

I WOULD have written you sooner, my dear Friend; but as our Treasurer was out of town until to-day, I did not wish to write except I could write to the purpose. To-day, I believe, our T. remits you the cash; on Monday next our committee meet, when you shall have a new order.

I hope and trust that this unlucky blast which has over-turned so many (and many worthy characters who, four months ago, little dreaded any such thing), will spare my Friend.

Oh! may the wrath and curse of all mankind haunt and harass these turbulent, unprincipled miscreants who have involved a People in this ruinous business!

* From the original MS., now possessed by George Wilson, Esq., of Dalmarnock.

I have not a moment more. Blessed be he that blesseth thee, and cursed be he that curseth thee! And the wretch whose envious malice would injure thee, may the Giver of every good and perfect gift say unto him—"Thou shalt not prosper!" R. B.

(4) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(Dr. Waddell's Ed., 1869.)

Friday, Noon, [*April* 1793.]

* * * * I MUST tell you that all the haberdashers here are on the alarm as to the necessary article of French gloves. You must know that French gloves are contraband goods, and expressly forbidden by the laws of this wisely-governed realm of ours. A satirist would say this is the reason why the ladies are so fond of them; but I, who have not one grain of *gall* in my composition, shall allege that it is the patriotism of the dear goddess of man's idolatry that makes them so fond of dress from the land of liberty and equality.

. . . . I have discovered one haberdasher who, at my request, will clothe your fair hands as they ought to be, to keep them from being profaned by the rude gaze of the gloating eye, or (horrid!) by the unhallowed lips of that Satyr man. . . . . .

So much for this important matter. I have received a long letter from Mr. Thomson, who presides over the publication of Scotch music, &c., which I mentioned to you. Would you honor the publication with a song from you? I have just sent him a new song to "The last time I came o'er the moor;" * but I don't know if I have succeeded. I enclose it for your

---

* *See* page 162 *supra.*

strictures. *Mary* was the name I intended my heroine to bear, but I altered it into your ladyship's as being infinitely more musical . . . . R. B.

(5) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(DR. WADDELL'S ED., 1869.)

[*April* 1793.]

ON Monday, my dear Madam, I shall most certainly do myself the honor of waiting on you, whether the Muses will wait on me is, I fear, dubious. Please accept a new song which I have this moment received from Urbani. It is a trifling present, but "Give all thou can'st." R. B.

(6) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[*April* 1793.]

I HAVE often told you, my dear friend, that you had a spice of caprice in your composition, and you have as often disavowed it; even perhaps while your opinions were, at the moment, irrefragably proving it. Could *anything* estrange me from a friend such as you? No! To-morrow I shall have the honor of waiting on you.

Farewell, thou first of friends, and most accomplished of women; even with all thy little caprices!

R. B.

(15) TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

[*April 26th* 1793.]

I AM d—nably out of humor, my dear Ainslie, and that is the reason why I take up the pen to *you:* 'tis

the nearest way (*probatum est*) to recover my spirits again.

I received your last, and was much entertained with it; but I will not at this time, or at any other time, answer it.—Answer a letter! I never could answer a letter in my life!—I have written many a letter in return for letters I have received; but then—they were original matter—spurtaway! zig, here; zag, there; as if the devil that, my grannie (an old woman indeed!) often told me, rode on Will-o'-wisp, or, in her more classic phrase, SPUNKIE, were looking over my elbow.—Happy thought that idea has engendered in my head! SPUNKIE,—thou shalt henceforth be my symbol, signature, and tutelary genius! Like thee, hap-step-and-lowp, here-awa-there-awa, higglety, pigglety, pell-mell, hither-and-yon, ram-stam, happy-go-lucky, up tails-a'-by-the-light-o'-the-moon; has been, is, and shall be, my progress through the mosses and moors of this vile, bleak, barren wilderness of a life of ours.

Come then, my guardian Spirit; like thee, may I skip away, amusing myself by and at my own light: and if any opaque-souled lubber of mankind complain that my elfine, lambent, glimmerous wanderings have misled his stupid steps over precipices, or into bogs; let the thick headed blunderbuss recollect, that he is not SPUNKIE:—that

> **Spunkie's wanderings could not copied be;**
> **Amid these perils none durst walk but he—***
> * * * * * *

*In 1834 the Ettrick Shepherd made a note here, thus:—"What a strange hipperty-skipperty letter this is to Ainslie! that is to say, to Ainslie as we know him now—the author of "The Father's Gift," and many beautiful little religious works! Ainslie, since ever I knew him,—and that is considerably upwards of twenty years, has been much the same—a downright honest, sleepy-headed, kind-hearted gentleman, his good humor never failing him, not even in his sleep, with which he generally favors the company once or twice in an evening. But even then, there is a benevolence in his countenance, that beams more intensely than when he is awake. I have seen him fall asleep in the blue parlor at Ambrose's, with North in the chair, and myself as croupier. Honest Ainslie!

I have no doubt but scholarcraft may be caught as a Scotsman catches the itch,—by friction. How else can you account for it, that born blockheads, by mere dint of *handling* books, grow so wise that even they themselves are equally convinced of and surprised at their own parts? I once carried this philosophy to that degree that in a knot of country folks who had a library amongst them, and who, to the honor of their good sense, made me factotum in the business; one of our members—a little, wise-looking, squat, upright, jabbering body of a tailor—I advised him, instead of turning over the leaves, *to bind the book on his back.*—Johnnie took the hint; and as our meetings were every fourth Saturday, and Pricklouse having a good Scots mile to walk in coming, and of course another in returning, Bodkin was sure to lay his hand on some heavy quarto or ponderous folio, with, and under which, wrapt up in his grey plaid, he grew wise as he grew weary, all the way home. He carried this so far, that an old musty Hebrew concordance, which we had a present of from a neighboring priest, by mere dint of applying it, as doctors do a blistering plaster, between his shoulders, Stitch, in a dozen pilgrimages, acquired as much rational theology as the said priest had done by forty years' perusal of the pages.

Tell me, and tell me truly, what you think of this theory! Yours, SPUNKIE.

At Whitsunday 1793, after a residence of eighteen months in the house before described, the poet with his family removed to a small self-contained abode of two floors with an attic flat, in the Mill Vennel, now called Burns Street. Ascending three steps to the front door, we find in the lower story a kitchen and parlor, the latter, a fine commodious room; and in the

---

that is a constitutional failing which he cannot help; for a man of kinder or better intentions was never born. He is now, alas! the only relic I know of the real intimate acquaintances of Burns." Ainslie survived to 1838.

floor above are two rooms of unequal size, the smaller one being that in which the poet breathed his last. Above all are two attic bedrooms where the children slept, and between these a closet, nine feet square, which the bard used as a study, or private retiring place. "It is just possible," wrote Robert Chambers, "that by the time the house came to be occupied, the cheerful views under which it had been taken were somewhat overcast; for the first few months of the war had intervened, producing a general difficulty throughout the nation."

So far as now appears, the first lyric suggested to Burns in the little *sanctum sanctorum* we have just described, was a song dedicated to the charms of Miss Lesley Baillie, of whom he had lately said—

> "To see her is to love her, and love but her for ever;
> For Nature made her what she is, and never made anither."

He now addressed to her the following letter enclosing the new song referred to.

(1) TO MISS LESLEY BAILLIE, OF MAYFIELD.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

[DUMFRIES, *end of May*, 1793.]

MADAM,—I have just put the last hand to the enclosed song, and I think that I may say of it, as Nature can say of you—"*There* is a work of mine, finished in my very finest style."

Among your sighing swains, if there should be one whose ardent sentiment and ingenuous modesty fetter his power of speech in your presence; with that look and attitude so native to your manner, and of all others the most bewitching—beauty listening to compassion—put my ballad in the poor fellow's hand, just to give a little breathing to the fervor of his soul.*

I have some pretence, Madam, to make you up the

* Marriage, June 1799.—"At Mayville, Robert Cumming of Logie, Esq., to Miss Lesley Baillie, daughter of Robert Baillie of Mayfield, Esq."—*Scots Mag.*

theme of my song, as you and I are two downright singularities in human nature. You will probably start at this assertion; but I believe it will be allowed that a woman exquisitely charming, without the least seeming consciousness of it, and a poet who never paid a compliment but where it was justly due, are two of the greatest rarities on earth. I have the honor to be, &c., R. B.

SONG,—*Tune*—"The Quaker's Wife."

Blythe hae I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me;
Careless ilka thought and free
As the breeze blew o'er me, &c.

(*See* page 163, *supra.*)

On 25th June 1793 our poet wrote to George Thomson, enclosing a new song to the tune of "Logan Braes," in which occurs this indignant stanza,

"Oh wae be to you, Men o' state,
That brethren rouse to deadly hate!
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!"

See Thomson Correspondence, Vol. V.

(1) TO MISS M'MURDO, DRUMLANRIG,

ENCLOSING A BALLAD I HAD COMPOSED ON HER.

(DOUGLASS, 1877.)

DUMFRIES, *July* 1793.

MADAM,—Amid the profusion of compliments and addresses which your age, sex, and accomplishments will now bring you, permit me to approach with my *devoirs*, which, however deficient may be their consequence in other respects, have the double novelty and merit, in these frivolous, hollow times, of being poetic and sincere. In the inclosed ballad I have, I think, hit off a few outlines of your portrait. The personal charms, the purity of mind, the ingenious *naïvête* of

heart and manners in my heroine are, I flatter myself, a pretty just likeness of Miss M'Murdo in a cottage. Every composition of this kind must have a series of dramatic incidents in it, so I have had recourse to my invention to finish the rest of my ballad.

So much from the poet. Now let me add a few wishes which every man who has himself the honor of being a father must breathe when he sees female youth, beauty, and innocence about to enter into this checquered, and very precarious world. May you, my young Madam, escape that frivolity which threatens universally to pervade the minds and manners of fashionable life, though it may pass by the rougher and more degenerate sex. The mob of fashionable female youth, what are they? are they anything? They prattle, laugh, sing, dance, finger a lesson, or perhaps turn over the parts of a fashionable novel, but are their minds stored with any information worthy of the noble powers of reason and judgment? or do their hearts glow with sentiment, ardent, generous, or humane? Were I to poetise on the subject, I would call them the butterflies of the human kind, remarkable only for, and distinguished only by, the idle variety of their ordinary glare, sillily straying from one blossoming weed to another, without a meaning and without an aim, the idiot prey of every pirate of the skies who thinks them worth his while as he wings his way by them, and speedily by wintry time swept to that oblivion whence they might as well never have appeared.

Amid this crowd of nothings may you, Madam, be something—may yours be a character dignified; a rational and immortal being.

A still more formidable plague in life—unfeeling, interested selfishness, is a contagion too impure to touch you. The selfish drift to bless yourself alone, to build your fame on another's ruin, to look on the

child of misfortune without commiseration, or even the victim of folly without pity—these, and every other feature of a heart rotten at the core, are what you are totally incapable of.

These wishes, Madam, are of no consequence to you, but to me they are of the utmost, as they give me an opportunity of declaring with what respect I have the honor to be, &c.,* R. B.

(*) TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ., DRUMLANRIG.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

[*Dumfries, July* 1793.]

SIR,—There is a beautiful, simple Scots air, which Mr. Clarke tells me has the good fortune to meet your approbation, and which he says he has taught to your young ladies, together with the rudiments of a Song which I intend to suit the tune.† That Ballad I enclose finished and, in my own opinion, in my best style; and I now beg leave to present to Miss M'Murdo the composition, as I think I have made it worthy, in some degree, of the subject. She I, from the beginning, meant for the Heroine of it.

Sincere respect, Sir, even from those who can bestow nothing else, or who are themselves of no consequence as folk of the world—such respect and tribute of the heart is an offering grateful to every mind. You know that it is a tribute I never pay but in the willing ardor of my soul. Kings give Coronets—alas! I can only bestow a Ballad. Still, however, I proud-

* The foregoing rather prosy, moralising letter (as it seems to us under the circumstances) is extracted from the volume of the author's letters collected for Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell. There is nothing of later date contained in that book, although this one ranks number 10 out of 28 examples so recorded. We shall find that at Christmas following the author was still employed in transcribing these letters into the collection.

† Page 167, *supra*.

ly claim one superiority even over Monarchs; my presents, so far as I am a Poet, are the presents of Genius; and as the gifts of R. Burns, they are the gifts of respectful gratitude to the Worthy. I assure you I am not a little flattered with the idea when I anticipate children pointing out in future publications the tributes of respect I have bestowed on their Mothers. The merits of the Scots airs to which many of my Songs are—and more will be—set, give me this pleasing hope.

You I believe are a subscriber to that splendid edition of Scots Music in which Pleyel presides over the musical department. In a future number of that Work (the first number is already published) this Ballad will probably appear. I have the honor to be, Sir, your obliged, humble serv^{t}. ROB^{T}. BURNS.

(8) TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ., WRITER, MAUCHLINE?

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

DUMFRIES, 16*th July* 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,—I understand that our friend, Mrs. Muir, of Tarbolton Mill, is likely to be involved in great difficulties as to the Settlement the late Miller made.† Will you be so obliging as to let me know the state of the case; and if you think it would answer any good purpose to advocate the cause to Edinburgh at once, I can answer for her—a Writer to the Signet, an intimate friend of mine, will cheerfully undertake the business, without a single sixpence of fees; and our countryman, David Cathcart, lies under

* The original MS., which wants the address (here supplied from conjecture) is in Detroit. We print from a copy in the "Scottish American Journal."

† This was Wm. Muir whose Epitaph is printed at page 59, Vol. I., and who occupied the "Willie's Mill" of "Death and Dr. Hornbook."

promise to me to advocate at small expense whenever I represent female poverty in distress. I am much interested for her, and will, as far as I have interest in either, move heaven and earth in her behalf. My interest in the first is vastly improved since you and I were first acquainted. Oh, there is nothing like matrimony for setting a man's face Zionward; whether it be that it sublimates a man above the visible diurnal sphere, or whether it tires him of this sublunary state, or whether the delicious morsel of happiness which he enjoys in the conjugal yoke gives him a longing for the feasts above, or whether a poor husband thinks he has every chance in his favor, as, should he go to hell, he can be no worse—I shall leave to a weel-waled Presbytery of orthodox Ayrshire priests to determine.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBT. BURNS.

In July of this year, Mr. George Thomson, published the first half volume of his Select Scottish Melodies, containing five of the songs written by Burns for that work. On receiving a copy of it, the poet thus wrote to the musical editor:—"Allow me to congratulate you now as a brother of the quill. You have committed your character and fame, which will be tried for ages to come by the illustrious jury of the Sons and Daughters of Taste—all whom poesy can please, or music charm. Being a bard of Nature, I have some pretensions to second-sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to foretell and affirm, that your great-great-grandchild will hold up your volumes, and say with honest pride:—'This so-much-admired selection was the work of my ancestor!'"*

It was at this time that Burns, under the influence of a morbid sentiment of independence, wrote in angry terms to Thomson for having presumed to remit him five pounds, "as a small mark of gratitude." "Your pecuniary parcel," he thus wrote, "degrades me in my own eyes; however, to return it would savor of bombast affectation. . . . Burns's

* It is perhaps not universally known that the sons and daughters of the late Charles Dickens are the great-grandchildren of George Thomson.

character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants which the cold, unfeeling ore can supply; at least I shall take care that such a character he shall deserve." The poet's indignant protestation contrasts strangely with the following fragment of a letter which has been preserved, addressed apparently about this time to

(5) JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ., DRUMLANRIG. (?)

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

THIS is a painful, disagreeable letter, and the first of the kind I ever wrote. I am truly in serious distress for three or four guineas; can you, my dear sir, accommodate me? These accursed times, by tripping up importation, have, for this year at least, lopped off a full third of my income; and with my large family this is to me a distressing matter. R. B.

Dr. Currie tells us that "during this time Burns made several excursions into the neighboring country, of one of which through Galloway, an account is preserved in a letter of Mr. Syme, written soon after;" and, as that production gives an animated picture of the poet, by a correct and masterly hand, he gladly recorded it as a valuable portion of the biography of Burns.

(6) EXCURSION INTO GALLOWAY WITH MR. SYME.

I got Burns a grey Highland shelty to ride on. We dined the first day, 27th July 1793, at Glendenwynes of Parton; a beautiful situation on the banks of the Dee. In the evening we walked out and ascended a gentle eminence, from which we had as fine a view of Alpine scenery as can well be imagined. A delightful soft evening showed all its wilder as well as its grander graces. Immediately opposite, and within a mile of us, we saw Airds, a charming romantic place, where dwelt Lowe, the author of "Mary, weep no more for me." This was classic ground for Burns. He viewed the highest

hill, which rises o'er the source of Dee, and would have staid till the "passing spirit" had appeared, had we not resolved to reach Kenmure that night. We arrived as Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were sitting down to supper.

Here is a genuine baron's seat. The castle, an old building, stands on a large natural moat. In front, the Ken winds for several miles through the most fertile and beautiful holm; till it expands into a lake twelve miles long, the banks of which, on the south, present a fine and soft landscape of green knolls, natural wood, and here and there a grey rock. On the north the aspect is great, wild, and, I may say, tremendous. In short, I can scarcely conceive a scene more terribly romantic than the castle of Kenmure. Burns thinks so highly of it, that he meditates a description of it in poetry. Indeed I believe he has begun the work. We spent three days with Mr. Gordon, whose polished hospitality is of an original and endearing kind. Mrs. Gordon's lap-dog "Echo" was dead. She would have an epitaph for him. Several had been made. Burns was asked for one. This was setting Hercules to the distaff. He disliked the subject, but, to please the lady, he would try. Here is what he produced:—

"In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
Now, half extinct your powers of song—
Sweet Echo is no more.
Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
Now, half your din of tuneless sound
With Echo silent lies.'

We left Kenmure, and went to Gatehouse. I took him the moor-road, where savage and desolate regions extended wide around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became lowering and dark. The hollow winds sighed, the lightnings gleamed, the thunder rolled. The poet enjoyed the awful scene—he spoke not a word, but seemed rapt in meditation. In a little while the rain began to fall; it poured in floods upon us. For three hours did the wild elements "rumble their bellyful" upon our defenceless heads. "Oh, oh! 'twas foul." We got utterly wet; and, to revenge ourselves, Burns insisted at Gatehouse, on our getting utterly drunk.

From Gatehouse we went next day to Kirkcudbright, through a fine country. But here I must tell you that Burns had got a pair of "Jemmy" boots for the journey, which had been thoroughly wet, and which had been dried in such a manner,

that it was not possible to get them on again. The brawny poet tried force, and tore them to shreds. A whiffling vexation of this sort is more trying to the temper than a serious calamity. We were going to St. Mary's Isle, the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, and the forlorn Burns was discomfited at the thought of his ruined boots. A sick stomach and a headache lent their aid, and the man of verse was quite *accablé*. I attempted to reason with him. Mercy on us, how he did fume and rage! Nothing could reinstate him in temper. I tried various expedients, and at last hit on one that succeeded. I showed him the house of Garlieston, across the Bay of Wigton. Against the Earl of Galloway with whom he was offended, he expectorated his spleen, and regained a most agreeable temper. He was in a most epigrammatic humor indeed! He afterwards fell on humbler game. There is one Morine whom he does not love. He had a passing blow at him:

> "When Morine deceas'd to the devil went down,
> 'Twas nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown:
> Thy fool's head, quoth Satan, that crown shall wear never,
> I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so clever."

Well, I am to bring my reader to Kirkcudbright along with our poet without boots. I carried the torn ruins across my saddle in spite of his fulminations, and in contempt of appearances; and what is more, Lord Selkirk carried them in his coach to Dumfries. He insisted they were worth mending.

We reached Kirkcudbright about one o'clock. I had promised that we should dine with one of the first men in our country, John Dalzell.* But Burns was in a wild and obstreperous humor, and swore he would not dine where he should be under the smallest restraint. We prevailed, therefore, on Mr. Dalzell to dine with us in the Inn, and had a very agreeable party. In the evening we set out for St. Mary's Isle. Robert had not absolutely regained the milkiness of good temper, and it occurred once or twice to him, as he rode

---

* Of Barncroch, near Kirkcudbright. He was on intimate terms with Gordon of Kenmure who once sent him a snuff-mull as a present. The acknowledgment of the gift would have been worthy of Burns:

> "Your present I received, and letter,
> No compliment could please me better,
> EX DONO NO KENMURE I'll put on it,
> And crown it wi' a silver bonnet,—
> In spite of a' the deils in hell,
> Your humble servant, JOHN DALZELL."

along, that St. Mary's Isle was the seat of a Lord; yet that lord was not an aristocrat, at least in his sense of the word. We arrived about eight o'clock, as the family were at tea and coffee. St. Mary's Isle is one of the most delightful places that can, in my opinion, be formed by the assemblage of every soft, but not tame object, which constitutes natural and cultivated beauty. But not to dwell on its external graces, let me tell you that we found all the ladies of the family (all beautiful) at home, and some strangers; and among others who but Urbani! The Italian sung us many Scottish songs, accompanied with instrumental music. The two young ladies of Selkirk sung also. We had the song of "Lord Gregory," which I asked for, to have an opportunity of calling on Burns to recite *his* ballad to that tune. He did recite it; and such was the effect, that a dead silence ensued. It was such a silence as a mind of feeling naturally preserves when it is touched with that enthusiasm which banishes every other thought but the contemplation and indulgence of the sympathy produced. Burns's "Lord Gregory" is, in my opinion, a most beautiful and affecting ballad. The fastidious critic may perhaps say some of the sentiments and imagery are of too elevated a kind for such a style of composition; for instance, "Thou bolt of heav'n that flashest by;" and "Ye mustering thunders from above;" but this is a cold-blooded objection, which will be *said* rather than *felt*.

We enjoyed a most happy evening at Lord Selkirk's. We had in every sense of the word a feast, in which our minds and our senses were equally gratified. The poet was delighted with his company, and acquitted himself to admiration. The lion that had raged so violently in the morning was now as mild and gentle as a lamb. Next day we returned to Dumfries, and so ends our peregrination.

I told you that in the midst of the storm on the wilds of Kenmure, Burns was rapt in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army along with Bruce, at Bannockburn. He was engaged in the same manner on our ride home from St. Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the following address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell.

"Scots! wha hae wi' Wallace bled," &c.

Dr. Currie gives his readers no clue to discover *for whom* the above lively account was prepared by Syme; but he says it

was "written soon after" the events which it describes. If so, Syme could not be mistaken as to the date of *Bruce's Address*, as he tells us the poet presented him with a copy, the day after their return from the tour. As a fact, this is contradicted by the letter from Burns to George Thomson, of 1st September thereafter, which distinctly says that he conceived that famous Ode during his evening walk on the preceding day. Currie must have felt the awkwardness of Syme's dilemma there; for, in tenderness to the living, he altered the words of the dead, so as to leave the date indefinite in his printed copy of the poet's letter. Instead of the genuine words —"This thought, in my yesternight's evening-walk, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiam," he set down the passage thus: —"This thought, in my solitary wanderings, warmed me," &c.

On the 30th day of the same month in which Burns composed Bruce's Address at Bannockburn, he presented, along with three other books, to the Dumfries Subscription Library, "Delolme on the British Constitution," on which he had inscribed the words: "Mr. Burns presents this book to the Library, and begs they will take it as a creed of British liberty —until they find a better.—R. B."

(?) TO CAPTAIN MILLER, DALSWINTON,

WITH BRUCE'S ADDRESS AT BANNOCKBURN.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

[DUMFRIES, 1793.]

DEAR SIR,—The following Ode is on a subject which I know you by no means regard with indifference.

"O Liberty,
Thou mak'st the gloomy face of Nature gay,
Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day."

It does me so much good to meet with a man whose honest bosom glows with the generous enthusiasm, the heroic daring of liberty, that I could not forbear sending you a composition of my own on the subject, which I really think is in my best manner. I have the honor to be, dear Sir, &c.,

ROBT. BURNS.

The new edition of the author's poems in two volumes, which appeared in the preceding February, had taken so well with the public that the number printed was nearly exhausted, and Mr. Creech had again applied to Burns on the subject of a fresh edition. He took some pains to correct the sheets, and introduced several alterations in the text, especially in the "Twa Dogs," the "Earnest Cry and Prayer," and "Death and Doctor Hornbook." The word "Poet" was substituted for "Bardie," which occurred in several of the pieces, and a few other trivial alterations were made; but no new pieces were added. It was by many supposed that those alterations—some of them no improvements—were made, or at least suggested by, Mr. A. Fraser Tytler; but we were recently shewn the "printer's copy" of volume first, in which the emendations referred to are inserted in a copy of the edition of 1793, in the bard's own hand. That relic, which once belonged to Archibald Constable the publisher, is now possessed by Captain Colin Mackenzie, London.

(7) MR. JAMES JOHNSON, ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

[DUMFRIES, *Oct.*, 1793.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I [have not lately had an opportunity] of writing to you: your songs much [occupy my thoughts, but I am worried by un]avoidable hurry. I am [now busy] correcting a new edition [of my poems, and] this, with my ordinary [business, finds me] in full employment.

[At your leisure, if you] choose, get somebody to class the first lines of the songs alphabetically, and I will draw out an Index of Author's names, as soon as you send the list, and return [corrected proofs of the songs.]

* The original document is a patched and pasted fragment—part of the Hastie collection, in the British Museum. The short insertions within brackets are here put in by conjecture to supply words eaten away from the manuscript. The longer passage at the end within brackets, is supplied from Cromek who printed it as a portion of another letter to Johnson, of later date; as he failed to decypher the present one, which had evidently been in his hands.

A valued musical acquaintance of [mine in the neighborhood] of Ayr is thinking [of publishing a] Collection of Strathspeys and Reels. [I have recommended him to you in this matter. Engage with him on the] same terms as you would another; but as you will be promptly paid, let him have your lowest terms. Write to me as to this matter in a post or two at farthest.

As to our Musical Museum, I have better than a dozen songs by me for the fifth volume. Send with Mr. Clarke when he comes to you, [whatever new airs you have] got. If we cannot finish the fifth volume any other way, what would you think of Scotch words to some beautiful Irish airs? In the meantime, at your leisure, give a copy of the Museum to my worthy friend, Mr. Peter Hill, Bookseller, to bind for me interleaved with blank leaves, exactly as he did the Laird of Glenriddell's, that I [may insert every anecdote I can learn, together with my own criticisms and remarks on the songs. A copy of this kind I shall leave with you, the editor, to publish at some after period, by way of making the Museum a book famous to the end of time, and you renowned for ever. In haste, yours, R. B.]

(8) TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON, EDINBURGH.

(Dr. Waddell's Ed. in part, Douglas, 1877, completed.)*

[Dumfries, *Oct.* 1793.]

I was much obliged to you, my dear Friend, for making me acquainted with Gow.† He is a modest, intelligent, worthy fellow; besides his being a man of

* We have collated this note with the poet's holograph in the British Museum, and inserted the passages missing in former printed copies.

† This is supposed to have been a brother of Neil Gow.

great genius in his way. I have spent many happy hours with him, in the short while he has been here.

Why did you not send me those tunes and verses that Clarke and you cannot make out? Let me have them as soon as possible, that while he is at hand, I may settle the matter with him. He and I have been very busy providing and laying out materials for your fifth volume. I have got about a dozen by me. If you can conveniently, let me have half a dozen copies of your fourth volume: I want no more. As soon as the bound copy of all the volumes is ready, take the trouble of forwarding it. In haste, yours ever,

R. B.

(?) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

Nov. 1793.

I WILL wait on you, my ever-valued friend, but whether in the morning I am not sure. Sunday closes a period of our curst revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen! There is a species of the human genus that I call the *gin-horse class:* what enviable dogs they are! Round, and round, and round they go—Mundell's ox that drives his cotton-mill is their exact prototype—without an idea or wish beyond their circle; fat, sleek, stupid, patient, quiet, and contented; while here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a d-mnd melange of fretfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor; my soul flouncing and fluttering round her tenement, like a wild finch, caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he

foretold—"And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!" If my resentment is awaked, it is sure to be where it dare not squeak; and if— * *

Pray that Wisdom and Bliss be more frequent visitors of R. B.

(8) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[*November, 1793.*]

DEAR MADAM, I meant to have called on you yesternight, but as I edged up to your box-door, the first object which greeted my view, was one of those lobster-coated puppies, sitting like another dragon, guarding the Hesperian fruit. On the conditions and capitulations you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly make my weather-beaten rustic phiz a part of your box-furniture on Tuesday; when we may arrange the business of the visit.

* * * * * *

Among the profusion of idle compliments, which insidious craft, or unmeaning folly, incessantly offer at your shrine—a shrine, how far exalted above such adoration—permit me, were it but for rarity's sake, to pay you the honest tribute of a warm heart and an independent mind; and to assure you, that I am, thou most amiable and most accomplished of thy sex, with the most respectful esteem, and fervent regard, thine, &c., R. B.

(2) TO MISS FONTENELLE, DUMFRIES THEATRE.

WITH A PROLOGUE FOR HER BENEFIT NIGHT. WEDNESDAY, 4TH DECR.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

Enclosed is the Address, such as it is, and may it be a prologue to an overflowing house. If all the town put together have half the ardor for your success and welfare of my individual wishes, my prayer will most certainly be granted. R. B.

[*2nd. Dec. 1793.*]

Still anxious to secure your partial favor,
And not less anxious sure this night than ever.

See p. 194, *supra.*

(1) TO CAPTAIN ——*

ENCLOSING "BRUCE'S ADDRESS AT BANNOCKBURN."

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

DUMFRIES, *5th December*, 1793.

SIR, heated as I was with wine yesternight, I was perhaps rather seemingly impertinent in my anxious wish to be honored with your acquaintance. You will forgive it—it was the impulse of heart-felt respect. "He is the father of Scottish county reform, and is a man who does honor to the business, at the same time the business does honor to him," said my worthy friend Glenriddel to somebody by me, who was talking of your coming to this country with your

* Chambers has suggested the name "Captn. Robertson of Lude" as the person here addressed: but that gentleman was "Major Robertson," see letter to Cunningham, 3rd March 1794.

corps. "Then," I said, "I have a woman's longing to take him by the hand, and say to him, 'Sir, I honor you as a man to whom the interests of humanity are dear, and as a patriot to whom the rights of your country are sacred.'"

In times like these, Sir, when our commoners are barely able by the glimmering of their own twilight understandings to scrawl a frank, and when lords are what gentlemen would be ashamed to be, to whom shall a sinking country call for help? To the independent country gentleman. To him who has too deep a stake in his country not to be in earnest for her welfare; and who, in the honest pride of man, can view with equal contempt the insolence of office and the allurements of corruption.

I mentioned to you a Scots ode or song I had lately composed, and which, I think, has some merit. Allow me to enclose it. When I fall in with you at the theatre, I shall be glad to have your opinion of it. Accept of it, Sir, as a very humble but most sincere tribute of respect from a man who, dear as he prizes poetic fame, yet holds dearer an independent mind. I have the honor to be, &c., R. B.

Mrs. Riddell returned to Woodley Park in October, after an absence of several months in London, where her husband left her while he proceeded to the West Indies to look after his affairs there. In a letter which she wrote to Mr. Smellie the printer, in November 1793, she said:—"Here am I, as chaste and domestic, but perhaps not quite so industrious, as Penelope in the absence of her hero. I resemble rather 'the lilies of the field, which toil not, neither do they spin'; but I read, I write, I sing, and contrive to wile away the time, as pleasantly as any sociable being like myself can do in a state of solitude, and in some measure, of mortification. . . . I shall write you more fully in my next, as to the nature of my present pursuits, and how I found Burns and the other friends here you left behind, for they were not few I assure you."* Mrs.

* Memoirs of William Smellie, by Robt. Kerr.

Riddell, however, had the Dumfries Theatre and other attractions in her neighborhood, every way calculated to yield her some consolation until the Christmas season arrived and brought home Mr. Riddell; and again at Woodley Park

"'Twas merry in the hall, when the beards wagg'd all," &c.

Mr. Creech's printer was about this time ready to throw off the sheets of the last edition of our author's poems, which he lived to see published, viz, that of 1794, in two volumes. A letter to Mr. Fraser Tytler, refers to that matter.

(1) TO ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

(Dr. Waddell's Ed., 1869.)

Sir, a poor caitiff, driving as I am at this moment with an excise quill, at the rate of "Devil take the hindmost," is ill qualified to round the period of gratitude, or swell the pathos of sensibility. Gratitude, like some other amiable qualities of the mind, is now-a-days so abused by impostors, that I have sometimes wished that the project of that sly dog Momus, I think it is, had gone into effect—planting a window in the breast of man. In that case, when a poor fellow comes, as I do at this moment, before his benefactor, tongue-tied with the sense of these very obligations, he would have nothing to do but place himself in front of his friend, and lay bare the workings of his bosom.

I again trouble you with another, and my last, parcel of manuscript. I am not interested in any of these; blot them at your pleasure. I am much indebted to you for taking the trouble of correcting the press work. One instance, indeed, may be rather unlucky; if the lines to Sir John Whitefoord are printed: they ought to end—

"And tread the *shadowy* path to that dark world unknown."

"shadowy," instead of "dreary," as I believe it stands at present.* I wish this could be noticed in the Errata. This comes of writing, as I generally do, from the memory.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your deeply indebted humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

6th Decr., 1793.

(?) TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ., DUMFRIES.

WITH A PARCEL.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

December 1793.

SIR,—It is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man. Here is Ker's account, and here are six guineas; and now I don't owe a shilling to man—or woman either. But for these damned dirty dog's ear'd little pages, I had done myself the honor to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under; the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman, of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too, was more than I could face.

I think I once mentioned something of a collection of Scots songs I have for some years been making: I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I could not conveniently spare them above five or six

* By some overlook or fatality this nice little correction was not attended to; and the line remained as it was until of very recent date, when Dr. Carruthers of Inverness published the present letter, which Colonel Fraser Tytler of Aldourie, had exhibited to him. The date in the MS. is "1795," and upon our representing to Dr. Carruthers the *unlikelihood* of that date, he examined the manuscript again and satisfied himself that the date is not in the poet's handwriting; but a conjectural one by some other hand.

days, and five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice you. A very few of them are my own. When you are tired of them, please leave them with Mr. Clint, of the King's Arms. There is not another copy of the collection in the world; and I should be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me a good deal of pains.

R. B.

Mr. M'Murdo seems to have been the patron to whom Burns applied during the past summer for a small loan; and it now appears that having paid an account of Mr. Ker's against that gentleman, he was here clearing off his own debt by enclosing Mr. Ker's discharge, along with six guineas of balance required to make up the whole personal obligation. The poet here congratulates himself on being now free of pecuniary debt; but the reader will hereafter find that he had involved himself in a like obligation to his landlord, Captain John Hamilton, in shape of arrears of house-rent, which was not entirely liquidated when he died.*

The "Collection of Scots Songs," referred to in the after part of the letter, was one which our bard had been at the pains to gather and transcribe into a book "for the use of the Crochallan Fencibles." "Unluckily (says Chambers) Burns's collection of these facetiæ, including his own essays in the same walk, fell after his death into the hands of one of those publishers who would sacrifice the highest interests of humanity to put an additional penny into their own purses; and to the lasting grief of all friends of our poet, they were allowed the honors of the press. The mean-looking volume which resulted (under the title of 'The Merry Muses of Caledonia'), should be a warning to all honorable men of letters against the slightest connexion with clandestine literature, much more the degradation of contributing to it."

That considerate editor at same time admits that Burns was induced to collect and imitate those indecorous songs and ballads "apparently for no other object than that of amusing his merry companions in their moments of conviviality;" and he pleads that he must have been led into this taste "by his enthusiastic reverence for all forms of his country's elder Muse; for, with a strange contradiction to the grave and religious

* *See* letter to Hamilton, July, 1794.

character of the Scottish people, they possess a wonderful quantity of that kind of literature. Not (still pleads Chambers) that it is of an inflammatory character, but simply expressive of a profound sense of the ludicrous in connection with the sexual affections."

We have seen many of our poet's holograph copies of his own performances in that way, and they seem to have been transmitted to his Edinburgh fellows of the social club referred to, by the hands of Robert Cleghorn, farmer, Saughton Mills, to whom they are generally found to be addressed. These effusions were sometimes accompanied by prose communications of which the following may be given as a sample.

(6) TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN, SAUGHTON MILLS.

(Douglas, 1877.)

I HAVE just bought a quire of post, and I am determined, my dear Cleghorn, to give you the maidenhead of it. Indeed that is all my reason for, and all that I can propose to give you by, this present scrawl. From my late hours last night, and the dripping fogs and damn'd east-wind of this stupid day, I have left me as little soul as an oyster—"Sir John, you are so fretful, you cannot live long"—"Why, there is it! Come, sing me a b—dy song to make me merry!!"

ACT SEDERUNT O' THE SESSION.

Tune.—"O'er the muir among the heather."

* * * * *

Well, the Law is good for something, since we can make a b—dy song out of it. (*N. B.*—I never made anything of it any other way.) There is—there must be some truth in original sin. My violent propensity to b—dy convinces me of it. Lack a day! if that species of composition be the special sin, never-to-be-forgiven in this world nor in that which is to come, "I am the most offending soul alive." Mair for token, a fine chiel—a hand-waled friend and crony o'

my ain, gat o'er the lugs in love wi' a braw, bonie, fodgel hizzie frae the English side, weel-ken'd i' the burgh of Annan by the name o' "Bonie Mary;" and I tauld the tale as follows: (*N. B.*—The chorus is auld.)

COME COWE ME, MINNIE, COME COWE ME.

Tune.—"My minnie's ay glowerin o'er me."

* * * * * *

Forgive this wicked scrawl. Thine in all the sincerity of a brace of honest Port. R. B.

Oct. 25th 1793.

THE PATRIARCH—A WICKED SONG,

AUTHOR'S NAME UNKNOWN.*

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

Tune.—"The Waukin o' a winter's night."

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.—Courteous Reader,—The following is certainly the production of one of those licentious, ungodly (too-much-abounding in this our day) wretches, who take it as a compliment to be called wicked, provided you allow them to be witty. Pity it is that while so many tar-barrels in the country are empty, and so many gibbets untenanted, some example is not made of these profligates!

* * * * * *

* Chambers, who first printed this heading in 1852, records that the poet's MS. was then possessed by the Town Clerk of Forfar.

(?) TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN, SAUGHTON MILLS.

(Douglas, 1877.)

My best compliments to Mrs. Cleghorn, and all your friends of my acquaintance. Many happy returns of the season to you, my worthy Sir, and (pardon me) your fully as worthy bedfellow. The foregoing poem is for her. For you, I make a present of the following new edition of an old Cloaciniad song, a species of composition which I have heard you admire, and a kind of song which I knew you wanted much. It is sung to an old tune, something like "Tak your ould cloak about ye."

There was twa wives, and twa witty wives,
Sat o'er a stowp o' brandy, &c., &c.

* * * * * *

God speed the plough, and send a good seed time! Amen! Farewell! Robt. Burns.

The reader may recollect of a letter by Lord Byron, dated 14th Dec. 1813, addressed to his friend Hodgson, in which he writes of some of Burns's manuscript letters thus:—"Will you tell Drury I have a treasure for him—a whole set of original Burns letters never published, nor to be published; for they are full of fearful oaths, and the most nauseous songs—all humorous, but coarse bawdry. However they are curiosities and shew him quite in a new point of view—the mixture, or rather contrast of tenderness, delicacy, obscenity, and coarseness in the same mind is wonderful." We suspect that Byron has not characterized those manuscripts quite correctly in every particular; for we never found "fearful oaths" in any of our poet's writings, and not one, even of his *wickedest* songs, can truly be termed "nauseous."

([38]) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, 15*th Dec.* 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—As I am in a complete Decemberish humor, gloomy, sullen, stupid, as even the deity of Dulness herself could wish, I shall not drawl out a heavy letter with a number of heavier apologies for my late silence. Only one I shall mention, because I know you will sympathise in it: these four months, a sweet little girl, my youngest child, has been so ill, that every day, a week or less threatened to terminate her existence.* There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the state of husband and father, for God knows they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties have frequently given me. I see a train of helpless little folk; me and my exertions all their stay; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate; even in all the vigor of manhood as I am, such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock! 'Tis here I envy your people of fortune. A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject!

To leave off talking of the matter so gravely, I shall sing with the old Scots ballad:—

---

* This was Elizabeth Riddell Burns, whose birth is announced at page 313, *supra*. She appears to have been from the first, a delicate infant, and at this date was the poet's youngest child; "James Glencairn" followed in August 1794, and Elizabeth was sent to be nursed by the Armours at Mauchline, where she died in Autumn 1795.

"O that I had ne'er been married,
I would never had nae care;
Now, I've gotten a wife and weans,
And they cry 'crowdie' evermair
Crowdie ance, crowdie twice,
Crowdie three times in a day;
An' ye crowdie ony mair
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away."

December 24th.

We have had a brilliant theatre here this season; only, as all other business has, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country—want of cash. I mention our theatre merely to lug in an occasional "Address" which I wrote for the benefit night of one of the actresses, which is as follows:—

ADDRESS SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT.

Wednesday December 4th, 1793, at the Theatre Dumfries.*

"Still anxious to secure your partial favor,
And not less anxious, sure this night than ever," &c.

See page 194, *supra.*

25th, Christmas Morning.

This, my much loved friend, is a morning of wishes: accept mine—so Heaven hear me, as they are sincere! that blessings may attend your steps, and affliction know you not! In the charming words of my favorite author, *The Man of Feeling*, "May the great spirit bear up the weight of the grey hairs: and blunt the arrow that brings them rest!"

Now that I talk of authors, how do you like Cow-

* Currie, who dates this letter 1795, has set down the date of this "benefit night" as having been "December 4th, 1795," and his mistake has been hitherto followed by every editor of Burns. The internal evidence, however, for 1793 is too strong to be controverted.

per? Is not the *Task* a glorious poem? The religion of the *Task*, bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and Nature: the religion that exalts, that ennobles man. Were not you to send me your *Zeluco* in return for mine? Tell me how you like my marks and notes through the book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms.*

I have lately collected, for a friend's perusal, all my letters: I mean those which I first sketched, in a rough draught, and afterwards wrote out fair. On looking over some old musty papers, which from time to time I had parcelled by, as trash that was scarce worth preserving, and which yet at the same time I did not care to destroy; I discovered many of these rude sketches, and have written, and am writing them out, in a bound MS. for my friend's library. As I wrote always to you the rhapsody of the moment, I cannot find a single scroll to you, except one, about the commencement of our acquaintance. If there were any possible conveyance, I would send you a perusal of my book. R. B.

The crowning evidence to prove Dr. Currie's mis-date of the foregoing letter lies in the closing paragraph where the poet refers to the Glenriddell manuscript book of letters. It may be suggested that this is only another instance of several fragments of the poet's correspondence being, in absence of full dates, conjecturally thrown together in the process of arranging the chronology of the letters; but it will be found that the text of each of the three divisions renders Dr. Currie's date an impossible one. In December 1795, the little girl whose ill health the writer deplores in the first portion of his letter, had been four months dead; and he himself was just getting into a convalescent state after being nearly brought by disease to the gates of death. At such a time, he could not have spoken of himself as being then "in all the vigor of manhood;"

* At page 239, *supra*, we have referred to this copy of *Zeluco*, now in the hands of Mrs. Dunlop's representatives.

neither can we conceive of him at that time writing thus:—"We had a brilliant theatre here this season." In 1793, however, that announcement, with its qualifying context, has its full meaning reflected from his other correspondence of that year.

A.D. 1794.

To Burns, this year opened as the previous one had closed, in a quiet, routine manner; but a short while elapsed when it was manifest that he had even more occasion now than at any previous New Year season to be on his guard against the social temptations to which he was so prone to yield. Just one year ago, he stated his position thus:—"Of exercise in the way of my business I have enough; but occasional hard-drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned; but it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard-drinking gentlemen of the country that do me the mischief." Probably it was of this period of the Bard's life that a lady in London (Mrs. Basil Montague, we think it was), told the characteristic anecdote to Bloomfield the poet, which Cromek recorded. She having ventured to remonstrate with Burns regarding his danger from social drinking, he replied, "Madam, they would not thank me for my company if I did not drink with them. I must give them a slice of my constitution!" Bloomfield, in giving the anecdote to Lord Buchan, remarked with true feeling—"How much is it to be regretted that he did not give them thinner slices of his constitution!"

(11) TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY.

(CHAMBERS, 1856.)

DUMFRIES, *Jan.* 1794.

SIR,—I am going to venture on a subject which, I am afraid, may appear, *from me*, improper; but as I do it from the best of motives, if you should not approve of my ideas, you will forgive them.

Economy of the public monies is, I know, highly the wish of your honorable board; and any hint conducive thereto which may occur to any, though the meanest individual in your service, it is surely his duty to communicate it.

I have been myself accustomed to labor, and have no notion that a servant of the public should eat the bread of idleness; so, what I have long digested, and am going to propose, is the reduction of one of our Dumfries divisions. Not only in these unlucky times, but even in the highest flush of business, my division, though by far the heaviest, was mere trifling—the others, still less. I would plan the reduction as thus: Let the second division be annihilated, and be divided among the others. The duties in it are, two chandlers, a common brewer, and some victuallers; these, with some tea and spirit stocks, are the whole division. The two chandlers I would give to the third or tobacco division; it is the idlest of us all. That I may seem impartial, I shall willingly take under my charge the common brewer and the victuallers. The tea and spirit stocks divide between the Bridgend and Dumfries second divisions. They have at present but very little, *comparatively*, to do, and are quite adequate to the task.

I assure you, Sir, that by my plan the duties will be equally well discharged, and thus an officer's appointment saved to the public. You must remark one thing—that our common brewers are, every man of them in Dumfries completely and unexceptionably, fair traders. One or two rascally creatures are in the Bridgend division; but besides being nearly ruined, as all smugglers deserve, by fines and forfeitures, their business is on the most trifling scale you can fancy.

I must beg of you, Sir, should my plan please you, that you will conceal my hand in it, and give it as your own thought. My warm and worthy friend, Mr.

Corbet, may think me an impertinent intermeddler in his department; and Mr. Findlater, my supervisor, who is not only one of the first, if not the very first, of excisemen in your service, but is also one of the worthiest fellows in the universe; he, I know, would feel hurt at it, and as he is one of my most intimate friends, you can easily figure how it would place me to have my plan known to him.

For further information on the subject, permit me to refer you to a young beginner whom you lately sent among us—Mr. Andrew Pearson, a gentleman that I am happy to say, from manner, abilities, and attention, promises, indeed, to be a great acquisition to the service of your honorable board.

This is a letter of business; in a future opportunity I may, and most certainly will, trouble you with one in my own way, *à la Parnasse.*

I have the honor to be, Sir, your much indebted and ever grateful servant, ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—I forgot to mention that, if my plan takes, let me recommend to your humanity and justice the present officer of the second division.* He is a very good officer, and is burdened with a family of small children, which, with some debts of early days, crush him much to the ground. R. B.

(5) TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

WITH A COPY OF BRUCE'S ADDRESS AT BANNOCKBURN.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

DUMFRIES, *12th Jan.* 1794.

MY LORD,—Will your Lordship allow me to present you with the inclosed little composition of mine,

* John M'Quaker, 43 years of age, 7 of a family, 13 years in the service, 5 years in present district.—R. B.

BURNS AND GAVIN HAMILTON (At Poosie-Nansie's).

as a small tribute of gratitude for that acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honor me. Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with any thing in history which interests my feelings as a man, equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel but able usurper leading on the finest army in Europe, to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly daring, and greatly injured, people: on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly, and indeed invaluable; for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

If my little ode has the honor of your Lordship's approbation, it will gratify my highest ambition.—I have honor to be, &c., R. B.

The original MS. of the foregoing letter, with its precious enclosure, is said to have been borrowed from the Earl by Mr. Cromek, while he was in Edinburgh gathering materials for his "Reliques of Burns." That editor has been traditionally charged with a propensity to delay the return of manuscripts entrusted to him for publication; and the following letter addressed to him by the Earl (which has recently fallen into our hands) gives some countenance to that tradition.

THE EARL OF BUCHAN TO MR. R. H. CROMEK.

(Douglas, 1877.)

Edinburgh, 23*d Feb.* 1809.

Sir,—Mr. Brooks, whom I have just seen, is surprised at your negligence in neither returning the drawing of "Nanse Tinnock,"* which he gave you on loan, nor sending him a

* It is probable that the Earl had purchased a drawing of considerable merit, by an anonymous artist, representing Nanse entering her little parlor with "a tappet hen" in one hand, and "girdle cakes weel-toasted brown" in the other. With characteristic Scotch expression in her face, she seems on the point of dropping a curtsey to her guests, of whom the only two visible are Burns and a douce-like elderly rustic, with whom he conducts an animated discourse over a half-mutchkin stoup, while a newspaper is spread before him, and his collie

copy of your fifth volume of Burns. I am equally surprised at your not availing yourself of the original letter from Burns to me, enclosing the Address of Bruce to his Troops at the Battle of Bannockburn, to have a Fac-simile thereof, as you promised while you were in Edinburgh.

By such conduct you must necessarily sink in the estimation of the public, and I am heartily sorry for it. You will therefore without delay return to me, through your Bookseller, the drawing of Nanse Tinnock, and the above-mentioned letter.

BUCHAN.

(1) TO MR. SAMUEL CLARK, JUN^{R}., DUMFRIES.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

SUNDAY MORNING, [January 1794].

DEAR SIR,—I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Captain Dods made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and family in a drunken squabble. Further, you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread last night's business may be misrepresented in the same way. You, I beg, will

---

crouches at his feet. That drawing was well engraved, and published in 1805, as the frontispiece to a thin 8vo volume, entitled "Views in North Britain, illustrative of the Works of Robert Burns," by James Storer and John Greig, engravers, London. A reduced copy of this engraving was given in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of Burns's works in 1835. The portrait of Nanse in the print has every appearance of having been taken from the life, while that of Burns is unmistakeably derived from Nasmyth's head. It may be that Lord Buchan had acquired the artist's original life-study of Nanse, from which the finished picture was formed.

take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mrs. Burns's welfare with the task of waiting, as soon as possible, on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, shew him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause,"—a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to. I request and beg that this morning you will wait on the parties present at the foolish dispute. I shall only add that I am truly sorry that a man, who stood so high in my estimation as Mr. Dods, should use me in the manner in which I conceive he has done. R. B.

The gentleman to whom the above letter is addressed was conjunct Commissary Clerk, and Clerk of the Peace for the County of Dumfries, at that time a young man aged twenty-five. For the knowledge of this fact we are indebted to Mr. William M'Dowall's "Memorials of St. Michael's Churchyard, Dumfries." Cromek named him correctly enough; but Chambers altered the Christian name to Stephen, in the belief that Cromek was in error. The letter refers to one of those painful political discussions, into which Burns was frequently led at this period by the vehemence of his own zeal in the cause of Liberty, and by his jealousy of the "lobster-coated puppies," as he termed those of the military profession who offensively paraded their loyalty in his presence.

The next letter in our series is addressed to the same gentleman, who, by the way, died in the prime of life in 1814; it was printed in Dr. Waddell's edition of the correspondence, from the original in possession of Mr. Clark's daughter, Mrs. Stewart Gladstone, of Capenoch, Dumfriesshire.

(²) TO MR. SAMUEL CLARK, JUNIOR, DUMFRIES.

(Dr. Waddell's Ed. 1869.)

My Dear Sir,—I recollect something of a drunken promise yesternight to breakfast with you this morning.

I am very sorry that it is impossible. I remember, too, you very obligingly mentioned something of your intimacy with Mr. Corbet, our Supervisor-General. Some of our folks about the Excise Office, Edinburgh, had, and perhaps still have, conceived a prejudice against me as being a drunken, dissipated character. I might be all this, you know, and yet be an honest fellow; but you know that I am an honest fellow, and am nothing of this. You may in your own way, let him know that I am not unworthy of subscribing myself, my dear Clark, your friend,

R. BURNS.

The foregoing letters will prepare the reader for the one which follows, referring to the unhappy results of a saturnalia of intemperance in which the poet mixed one evening at Woodley Park, where he was one of several guests of Mr. Walter Riddell. We have (at page 192, *supra*) stated as circumstantially as it has ever been told, the whole that is really known of the incident which occasioned Burns to write as follows, from the depths of his remorse:—

(?) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, *January* 1794.

MADAM,—I daresay that this is the first epistle you ever received from the nether world. I write you from the regions of Hell, amid the horrors of the damned. The time and manner of my leaving your earth I do not exactly know; as I took my departure in the heat of a fever of intoxication, contracted at your too hospitable mansion; but on my arrival here, I was fairly tried, and sentenced to endure the purgatorial tortures of this infernal confine, for the space of ninety-nine years, eleven months, and twenty-nine days; and all on account of the impropriety of my conduct yesternight under your roof. Here am I,

laid on a bed of pitiless furze, with my aching head reclining on a pillow of ever-piercing thorn, while an infernal tormenter, wrinkled, and old, and cruel, his name I think is *Recollection*, with a whip of scorpions, forbids peace or rest to approach me, and keeps anguish eternally awake. Still, Madam, if I could in any measure be reinstated in the good opinion of the fair circle whom my conduct last night so much injured, I think it would be an alleviation to my torments. For this reason I trouble you with this letter. To the men of the company I will make no apology.—Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me; and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt. But to you, Madam, I have much to apologise. Your Good opinion I valued as one of the greatest acquisitions I had on earth, and I was truly a beast to forfeit it. There was a Miss J—— too, a woman of fine sense, gentle and unassuming manners. Do make, on my part, a miserable, d——d wretch's best apology to her. A Mrs. G——, a charming woman, did me the honor to be prejudiced in my favor; this makes me hope that I have not outraged her beyond all forgiveness. To all the other ladies please present my humblest contrition for my conduct, and my petition for their gracious pardon. O all ye Powers of decency and decorum! whisper to them that my errors, though great, were involuntary—that an intoxicated man is the vilest of beasts—that it was not in my nature to be brutal to any one—that to be rude to a woman, when in my senses, was impossible to me—but

* * * *

Regret! Remorse! Shame! ye three hell-hounds that ever dog my steps and bay at my heels, spare me! spare me!

Forgive the offences, and pity the perdition of, Madam, your humble slave, ROBT. BURNS.

It is evident from the items of correspondence handed down to us, that the breach betwixt Burns and the Riddells was not at first so wide as it afterwards became through the officious intermeddling of second parties. And even then, not until our poet had exhausted every honorable means of reconciliation did his wounded pride instigate him to resort to the expedient of making Mrs. Riddell and her friends the theme of very ill-natured effusions of his muse. But the most distressing part of this pitiful squabble is that the poet's ancient and most valued friend, Captain Riddell of Glenriddell, was dragged into the *mêlée*, and prevailed on to side with his brother's family against Burns. A few words of temperate explanation might have restored matters to their usual position there; but the opportunity for that had not yet arrived when, in the month of April following, the death of Glenriddell was announced.

The two following letters to Mrs. Riddell seem to have been penned during the earlier stages of the quarrel between her and Burns.

([10]) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, 1794.

MADAM,—I return your common-place book. I have perused it with much pleasure, and would have continued my criticisms, but as it seems the critic has forfeited your esteem, his strictures must lose their value.

If it is true that "offences come only from the heart," before you I am guiltless. To admire, esteem, and prize you as the most accomplished of women, and the first of friends—if these are crimes, I am the most offending thing alive.

In a face where I used to meet the kind complacency of friendly confidence, *now* to find cold neglect, and contemptuous scorn, is a wrench that my heart can ill bear. It is, however, some kind of miserable good-luck, that while *de-haut-en-bas* rigor may depress an unoffending wretch to the ground, it has a ten-

dency to rouse a stubborn something in his bosom, which, though it cannot heal the wounds of his soul, is at least an opiate to blunt their poignancy.

With the profoundest respect for your abilities; the most sincere esteem and ardent regard for your gentle heart and amiable manners; and the most fervent wish and prayer for your welfare, peace, and bliss, I have the honor to be, Madam, your most devoted humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.

([11]) TO MRS. RIDDELL, WOODLEY PARK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, 1794.

I HAVE this very moment got the Song from Syme, and I am sorry to see that he has spoilt it a good deal. It shall be a lesson to me how I lend him any thing again.

I have sent you *Worter;* truly happy to have any, the smallest opportunity of obliging you.

'Tis true, Madam, I saw you once since I was at W—— P——; and that once froze the very life-blood of my heart. Your reception of me was such, that a wretch meeting the eye of his Judge, about to pronounce sentence of death on him, could only have envied my feelings and situation. But I hate the theme, and never more shall write or speak of it.

One thing I shall proudly say, that I can pay Mrs. R. a higher tribute of esteem, and appreciate her amiable worth more truly than any man whom I have seen approach her; nor will I yield the *pas* to any man living, in subscribing myself with the sincerest truth, her devoted humble servt., R. B.

(12) TO ALEX. CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

DUMFRIES, *25th February* 1794.

CANST thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tossed on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame trembling under the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldst thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy enquiries after me?

* * * * *

For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria which poisons my existence. Of late, a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these d—d times; losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill-bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.

Still there are two pillars that bear us up amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble,

stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments which, however the sceptic may deny them, or the enthusiast may disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to, those awful obscure realities—an all powerful and equally beneficent God, and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field; the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW, to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know any thing of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow, who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all Nature, and thro' Nature up to

Nature's God; his soul, by swift delighting degrees, is wrapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thompson—

> "These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God, the rolling year
> Is full of thee:"

and so on, in all the spirit and ardor of that charming hymn.

These are no ideal pleasures; they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say, equal to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious Virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God.*

(14) TO MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

(CHAMBERS, 1852, in part, and completed in DOUGLAS' ED., 1877.)†

DUMFRIES, *Feb.* 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am half angry with you that you are not at any pains to keep squares with our Library here. They complain much of your not attending properly to their orders; and, but for the exertions of Mr. Lewars, a young man whom I once introduced to you, they had applied elsewhere. Apropos, the first volume of Dalrymple's Memoirs, Mr.

* "They who have been told that Burns was ever a degraded being, who have permitted themselves to believe that his only consolations were those of 'the opiate guilt applies to grief,' will do well to pause over this noble letter and judge for themselves. The enemy under which he was destined to sink, had already beaten in the outworks of his constitution when these lines were penned."—*Lockhart's "Life of Burns."*

† Mr. Douglas was enabled to complete this letter through the politeness of George Wilson, Esq., of Dalmarnock, possessor of the original MS.

Lewars had the ill-luck to get spoiled in his possession, which unless he can replace will bring him in for the whole book. It was published, I think, in separate volumes, so that, with a little industry, you may possibly be able to supply him. Mr. Wallace, the gentleman who will deliver this, can inform you of the edition, &c.

Now that business is over, how are you? and how do you weather this accursed time? God only knows what will be the consequence; but in the meantime, the country—at least our part of it—is still progressive to the devil. For my part, I "jouk and let the jaw flee o'er." As my hopes in this world are but slender, I am turning rapidly devotee, in the prospect of sharing largely in the world to come.

How is old, sinful Smellie coming on with this world?—for as to the other, I suppose he has given that up. Is there any talk of his second volume? If you meet with my much valued old friend, Colonel Dunbar, of the Crochallan Fencibles, remember me most affectionately to him. Alas! not unfrequently, when my heart is in a wandering humor, I live past scenes over again: to my mind's eye, you, Dunbar, Cleghorn, Cunningham, &c., present their friendly phizes, and my bosom aches with tender recollections,—
Adieu, ROBT. BURNS.

(9) TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON, MUSIC ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

(CROMEK, in part, and completed in DOUGLAS' ED., 1877.)*

MY DEAR SIR,—I send you, by my friend Mr. Wallace, forty-one songs for your 5th Volume. Mr. Clarke has also a good many, if he have not, with

* From the original MS. in the British Museum.

his usual indolence, *cast them at the cocks.* I have still a good parcel amongst my hands in scraps and fragments; so that I hope we will make shift with our last volume.

You should have heard from me long ago; but over and above some vexatious share in the pecuniary losses of these accursed tunes, I have, all this winter, been plagued with low spirits and blue devils; so that I have almost hung my harp upon the willow trees.

I have got an old Highland durk for which I have great veneration, as it once was the durk of Lord Balmerino. It fell into bad hands who stripped it of the silver mounting, as well as the knife and fork. I have some thoughts of sending it to your care to get mounted anew. Our friend Clarke owes me an account, somewhere about a pound, which would go a good way in paying the expense. I remember you once settled an account in this way before; and as you still have money matters to settle with him, you might accommodate us both.—I do not, my dear Sir, wish you to do this; and I beg you will not hint it to Mr. Clarke; if we do it at all, I will break it to him myself. My best compliments to your worthy old father and your better half.—Yours

ROBT. BURNS.

DUMFRIES, [*Feb.*] 1794.

(3) TO MR. ALEXANDER FINDLATER,

SUPERVISOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

DUMFRIES, [*Feb.*] 1794.

SIR,—Inclosed are the two schemes. I would not have troubled you with the Collector's one, but for suspicion lest it be not right. Mr. Erskine promised

me to make it right, if you will have the goodness to shew him how. As I have no copy of the scheme for myself, and the alterations being very considerable from what it was formerly, I hope that I shall have access to this scheme I send you, when I come to face up my new books. *So much for schemes.*—And that no scheme to betray a FRIEND, or mislead a STRANGER; to seduce a YOUNG GIRL, or rob a HEN-ROOST; to subvert LIBERTY, or bribe an EXCISEMAN; to disturb the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, or annoy a GOSSIPPING; to overthrow the credit of ORTHODOXY, or the authority of OLD SONGS; to oppose *your wishes*, or frustrate *my hopes*—MAY PROSPER, is the sincere wish and prayer of ROBT. BURNS.

(13) TO ALEX. CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

(CURRIE in part, completed, DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

DUMFRIES, *3d March* 1794.

SINCE I wrote you the last lugubrious sheet, I have not had time to write you further. When I say that I had not time; that, as usual, means that the three demons Indolence, Business, and Ennui, have so completely shared my hours among them as not to leave me a five minutes' fragment to take up a pen in.

Thank heaven, I feel my spirits buoying upwards with the renovating year. Now I shall in good earnest take up Thomson's songs. I daresay he thinks I have used him unkindly, and, I must own, with too much appearance of truth; though, if offences come only from the heart, I assure him that I am innocent. Apropos, do you know the much admired old Highland air called "The Sutor's Dochter?" It

* From the original MS. in possession of James T. Gibson Craig, Esq. Edinburgh.

is a first-rate favorite of mine, and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it. I will send it you, set as I think it should be, and as it was sung with great applause in many fashionable groups by Major Robertson, of Lude, who was here with his corps. By the way, if you do not know him, let me beg of you, as you would relish a high acquisition to your social happiness, to get acquainted with him. He always, every time I had the very great pleasure of being in his company, reminded me of a forcible saying of Charlie Caldwell, a drunken carrier in Ayr: —Charles had a *cara sposa* after his own heart, who used to take caup about with him, till neither could see the other; then those honest genii of old Scottish social life ("reaming swats" used to transport the tender pair beyond the bounds of sober joy, to the reign of rapture!)—the ardent lover would grapple the yielding fair to his bosom:—"Marget, ye're a glory to God, and the delight o' my soul!"

As I cannot in conscience tax you with the postage of a packet, I must keep this bizzare melange of an epistle until I find the chance of a private conveyance. Here follows the song I have mentioned:—

SONG.

Tune—"The Sutor's Dochter."

Wilt thou be my Dearie?
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
O wilt thou let me cheer thee, &c.

(*Page* 198, *supra.*)

There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a present from a departed friend, which vexes me much.* I have gotten one of your Highland pebbles which I fancy would make a very decent one, and I want to cut

* Probably the seal, already more than once referred to, having for device a *heart* transpierced by cross darts.

my armorial bearings on it; will you be so obliging as enquire what will be the expense of such a business? I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the heralds call it, at all; but I have invented one for myself, so, you know I will be chief of the name; and, by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These however I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field, azure, a holly-bush, seeded, proper, in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltier-wise, also proper, in chief. On a wreath of the colors, a woodlark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes: round the top of the crest, "Wood-Notes Wild;" at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, "Better a wee bush than nae bield." By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters in Arcadia, but a *Stock* and *Horn*, and a *Club*, such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay, in Allan's quarto edition of the "Gentle Shepherd." By the bye, do you know Allan? He must be a man of very great genius—Why is he not more known?—Has he no patrons? or, do "Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain beat keen and heavy" on him? I once, and but once, got a glance of that noble edition of the noblest pastoral in the world; and dear as it was, I mean dear as to my pocket, I would have bought it; but was told it was printed and engraved for subscribers only. He is the only artist who has hit genuine pastoral costume. What, my dear Cunningham, is there in riches, that they narrow and encallous the heart so? I think that were I as rich as the sun, I would be as generous as day; but as I have no reason to imagine my soul a nobler one than every other man's, I must conclude that wealth imparts a bird-lime quality to the possessor, at which the man in native poverty, would have revolted. What has led me to this, is the

idea of so much merit as Mr. Allan possesses, and such riches as a nabob, or government contractor possesses, and why do not they form a mutual league? Let Wealth shelter and cherish unprotected Merit, and the gratitude and celebrity of that merit will richly repay the outlay.

March 22.

In fact, I am writing you a journal, and not a letter. A bustle of business has laid my epistolary pen aside in silence, since I took it up last to you.

I have just received a letter from Thomson which has filled me with self-reproaches. I will directly, and in good earnest, set about his work. I am sorry I did not know him when I was in Edinburgh; but I will tell you a plot which I have been contriving: you and he shall, in the course of this summer, meet me Half-way; that is, at the "Bield Inn;" * and there we will pour out a Drink Offering before the Lord, and enter into a solemn League and Covenant, never to be broken nor forgotten.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loon is he:
Wha first beside his chair shall fa'
He is the King amang us THREE.

ROBT. BURNS.

* Such a meeting as is here proposed never took place. The *Bield Inn* and the *Crook Inn* are each pretty closely situated on the highroad, exactly half-way between Edinburgh and Dumfries, near Tweedsmuir in Peebles-shire.

BURNS'S ARMS.

END OF VOLUME IV.